

VICSES Annual Report

2025-2026

SES

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Victoria State Emergency Service (VICSES)
168 Sturt Street
Southbank VIC 3006

Phone: +61 3 9256 9000



VICSES respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land and waters. We pay our respects to Elders past and present.

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Responsible Body Declaration

Paul Edbrooke MP
Minister for Emergency Services
Level 26, 121 Exhibition Street
Melbourne 3000

Dear Minister,

In accordance with the *Financial Management Act 1994*, I am pleased to present the VICSES Annual Report for the year ending June 2026.



Jasmine Doak
VICSES Board Chair
Melbourne, September 2026

VICSES at a glance



Who we are

Control agency for:

Flood · Storm · Earthquake · Tsunami · Landslide

154 Units

17 Permanently staffed offices

105 Road rescue providers

Our people in 2025-26

5,098 Volunteers*

Female 33.7%
Male 66%
Other 0.3%

Volunteer leadership (Controllers and Deputy Controllers)
Female 32% Male 68%

338 Staff

Female 46.2%
Male 53.5%
Other 0.3%

Staff leadership (Has at least one direct report)
Female 41% Male 59%

*Active and non-active

Our agency in 2025-26

319,221 Volunteer hours

32,934 Incidents

Flood
10,517 hours **2,026** incidents

Storm
116,571 hours **21,038** incidents

Road crash rescue
16,168 hours **2,554** incidents

Tsunami, landslide and earthquake
463 hours **90** incidents

Assist agency
53,792 hours **4,087** incidents

Community engagement
112,769 hours **2,073** incidents

Other
8,941 hours **1,066** incidents

2025-26 marks our busiest year on record for road crash rescue and assist agency.

About VICSES

Our Vision

Safer Communities – Together.

Our Mission

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

Our Values



We pride ourselves on our credibility

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

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



We are part of our community

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

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

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



Safety drives our decisions

We empower our people to work within their capability to ensure we 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.

Who we are

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

We are the control agency for flood, storm, tsunami, earthquake, and landslide throughout Victoria, and provide the largest road rescue network in Australia, with 105 accredited road crash rescue specialist units across the state.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

This document provides an overview of the work undertaken by VICSES in the 2025-26 financial year, and aims to highlight our unique strengths and expertise, while addressing our current challenges now and into the future. It demonstrates our strong commitment to advocate for the continued investment in our people, our capabilities, the way we operate, and our technology to be a viable and sustainable emergency management service and realise our vision of *Safer Communities – Together*.

Our Value Proposition

Our people

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

Community and government

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

Employers

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

Partners

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

Chief Executive Officer Report

It's my pleasure to present the 2025-26 Annual Report, highlighting the milestones and achievements of the previous financial year.

It's been a busy and challenging 12 months, seeing over 32,900 incidents across the state. This includes our response to unique flash flooding, multiple storm events, road and other specialist rescue operations, multiple deployments interstate, and assistance for our partner agencies including critical fire support during one of the most intense High Risk Weather Seasons for some years. Notably, this response included the deployment of 140 VICSES volunteers to support door knocking efforts to evacuate residents across the Otways, who were faced with evacuation warnings due to extreme fire conditions. This was an incredible effort which showcases the integral role of VICSES in our communities.

In addition to our significant operational response, we've seen extensive work across the organisation to deliver our Strategic Plan and towards continuous service delivery and supporting our people.

The safety and wellbeing of our communities is at the heart of everything we do and a primary focus – and this includes protecting children and vulnerable people. This financial year we made a commitment to roll out enhanced screening requirements for members, ensuring that all volunteers and staff have a valid Working with Children Check. I am pleased to say that today, 100% of our membership is now compliant with this requirement – a testament to our commitment to being a safe and trustworthy organisation.

In August 2025 we commenced work towards our new VICSES Capability Framework – an important step in strengthening how we plan, invest and deliver across our organisation including our 2023-27 Strategic Plan. The framework provides us with a clearer picture of where capability is strong, where it's stretched and where it is needed – helping us achieve the right balance between supporting our communities and our people. To date the plan has undergone significant consultation with members and is expected to be launched later in 2026.

During 2025-26 work also commenced towards the development of a new Operational Training Roadmap, delivered in July 2026. The roadmap establishes a clear, strategic direction for the future of operational training across our regions, ensuring a sustainable and future-ready training system for our volunteers and the communities they serve.

Leadership capability has remained a key priority across our volunteer and staff membership during 2025-26. This includes the LEAD leadership development program, which saw over 110 volunteers and staff complete the five-month program to strengthen and evolve their leadership skills and practices. Our volunteer leadership development has been further strengthened via our Unit Controller Mentoring Program, which has now been piloted and pairs experienced volunteer leaders with new Unit Controllers to support leadership capability and knowledge sharing.

We have also made major strides in improvements towards our fleet, with the successful design, production and deployment of our first Next Generation Heavy Rescue Truck (NextGen HRT) prototypes. Supporting our commitment to engagement, the first NextGen HRT prototype truck was showcased to members across a statewide roadshow, providing volunteers with the opportunity to provide valuable feedback to better meet our operational service delivery. This feedback was incorporated into a second prototype, which was extremely well-received and endorsed as the new standard NextGen HRT model. We have four specialist vehicle build partners now undertaking the construction of the remainder of the replacement fleet across the next two financial years, with 25 new trucks expected to be delivered during 2026-27 – a welcome and much needed addition to our fleet in ensuring we continue to meet our operational demands across the state.

Work has also been underway towards the development of our NextGen Medium Rescue Truck (MRT), further improving the operational capability and response of our fleet. During this financial year

a Fleet Working Group was established to support the project, formed by volunteers from various units to provide their expertise and knowledge to ensure the new prototype meets the needs of our units.

As a key outcome of our Strategic Plan, we have continued to build our connection with communities to enhance their preparedness for emergency weather events. During 2025-26 our members committed over 112,700 hours of community engagement, increasing public awareness of what we do and importantly, preparedness action before and during an emergency. A key achievement for this financial year included VICSES being awarded the Gold Ribbon for Community Connection at the 2025 Melbourne Royal Show, showcasing our commitment to meaningful engagement and enhancing community preparedness.

Another important initiative has been the establishment of both the Regional and Metropolitan Flood Risk Engagement programs. This work is the largest risk preparedness program we've undertaken in some years following significant investment in updated flood modelling across the state. The application of critical new information is utilised in our emergency management planning, community preparedness efforts and in operations. It's pleasing to see these programs off the ground, working to ensure VICSES, our partner agencies such as the Catchment Management Authorities and our communities are equipped with the most current information to make informed decisions in the event of flooding and improving community safety outcomes.

Finally, throughout this financial year I've had the pleasure of getting out and about with our Executive team, meeting with many volunteers and staff in our Unit Area Groupings right across the state. It's been fantastic to meet with members face-to-face and listen to their stories, experience and ways that we can continue to better support our people.

Our members are the backbone of VICSES and the Victorian emergency management sector and I cannot thank them enough for their contributions throughout the last 12 months, and their dedication towards VICSES, the sector and our communities.



Rob Purcell
VICSES Chief Executive Officer
Melbourne, July 2026

Chair Foreword

On behalf of the VICSES Board, I am pleased to present the 2025-26 Annual Report.

It's been another extremely busy year for our members, with over 319,200 hours contributed across flood and storm emergencies, rescues, community engagement and so much more, particularly during a challenging high risk weather season. These contributions showcase the integral role of VICSES as part of our emergency services sector and the role we play in ensuring the safety of all Victorians.

Alongside our deliverables for 2025-26, this financial year we've seen a huge amount of work towards scoping and planning for the future of our organisation.

In March, we commenced planning for the roll-out of the final year of our 2023-27 Strategic Plan. This annual planning is built on the strategic outcomes and priorities set by the Board, our enterprise risk profile, legislative responsibilities, and funding confirmed by Government. We continue to advocate for funding as part of this planning to finalise our priorities moving forward, which will support our people and our critical service delivery.

In support of our members, there is much work progressing to support both our volunteer and staff cohorts. This includes strengthening workforce planning with the ongoing development of a comprehensive workforce management framework to ensure we have the right people, with the right skills, in the right roles, and strengthening volunteer leadership by building on the volunteer LEAD program as well as a leadership framework for Unit Controller induction, leadership development, mentoring and succession planning. In addition, a new Volunteer Recruitment and Retention Plan project is also underway which aims to create a contemporary approach to recruitment and retention to ensure VICSES has a strong, sustainable and diverse volunteer workforce for the future.

As the demand for our services increases, alongside population growth across Victoria, project planning towards the delivery of new units across the state is also well underway. Building on the work completed this financial year, over the next two years we expect to see the completion of new builds for brand new units at Devon Meadows and Kalkallo, new facilities for existing units including Bannockburn, Corio, Footscray, Kilmore, Port Phillip, and Wyndham Vale, and new co-located unit facilities with the Country Fire Authority (CFA) for our Rochester and Heathcote Units.

To ensure the ongoing safety of our people while operating vehicles as part of our fleet including our rescue trucks, planning for the development of a new Driver Safety Framework has been progressing. The framework establishes a new statewide driver training and endorsement program for all volunteers and staff, with expected delivery in the new financial year.

The delivery of the 2025-27 VICSES Community Preparedness Action Plan continues to roll out, supported by a renewed agreement with AAMI as our Principal Community Partner. A volunteer community engagement state reference group will soon be established, with planning underway to host a state forum for existing Community Engagement Facilitators (CEFs) in April 2027 to support our strategic outcomes and emphasis on community engagement and preparedness.

Planning is also underway to complete research into our brand health, to get a better picture of community perceptions of VICSES, our services, and the value we are providing to the community.

All this work ensures that VICSES is well placed to continue to support our people and our high standard of service delivery across the state to keep our communities safe.

Additionally, in March, I had the pleasure of attending one of the seven VICSES-led Women in Rescue events held across Victoria. This fantastic initiative brings together women from across the service and provides the opportunity to get hands on with equipment and build on rescue skills in a safe and supportive environment. It was terrific to see multiple partner agencies also get involved on the day, showcasing strong collaboration within the sector and our commitment to working as one.

I would like to extend my gratitude to our volunteers, staff, the Executive team, and my fellow Board members, for your contributions throughout 2025-26. Your wisdom, commitment, generosity, and passion to serve our community is unsurpassed. It is an honour to serve the people of VICSES, and I look forward to the next 12 months and all that we will achieve together.



Jasmine Doak
VICSES Board Chair
Melbourne, July 2026

VICSES today

VICSES has a rich historical past. Established as a volunteer based Civil Defence Organisation which could quickly be activated in the event of war, VICSES has been involved in most major emergency responses in Victoria since we began in 1950. In 2025, we celebrated 50 years of VICSES.

1950

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

1972



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

1975

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

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.

1981



2005

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

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

VICSES Today

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

VICSES Strategic Plan 2023-2027

2025



50 Years of VICSES

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



Our Strategy: 2023-2027

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

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

Emergency Management

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

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

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

- Supporting our partner agencies:
  - Ambulance Victoria
  - Country Fire Authority (CFA)
  - Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA)
  - Fire Rescue Victoria (FRV)
  - Parks Victoria
  - Victoria Police

- Rescue of persons from, or endangered by:
  - Road, aircraft, industrial and rail incidents
  - Steep and high angle incidents
  - Damaged or collapsed buildings
  - Swift water
  - Other emergency or dangerous situations

- Assisting:
  - Search and rescue on land, including caves and on water
  - Evacuation
  - Incidents involving mass casualties

- Provision of information and advice to the community and government before, during, and after emergency events.

The volunteer experience

VICSES is a volunteer-centric organisation that is committed to providing a volunteer experience that meets the cultural, family, and work need of our volunteers. This is supported by the implementation of our renewed Operating Model in early 2022, with a core focus on our volunteers, as well as outcomes, priorities, and key measures as part of our 2023-2027 Strategic Plan (see page 13).

VICSES Board

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

Jasmine Doak

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

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

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

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

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

Casey Nunn ASM OAM

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

Casey has more than 30 years' experience in emergency services, serving as a volunteer with Ambulance Victoria and CFA. She was awarded the Ambulance Service Medal (ASM) in the 2011 Australia Day Honours and, in 2012 received an Emergency Services Foundation Scholarship to study volunteer leadership across the United States and Canada.

A former Mayor of Hume City Council, Casey has extensive governance experience across the public, community and superannuation sectors. She is a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors (GAICD) and holds a Graduate Certificate in Cyber Security Governance and Risk Management from RMIT University, graduating with Distinction.

Casey was inducted into the Victorian Honour Roll of Women in 2019 and was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in 2021 for service to the community.

Dr. Bernadette Northeast

Bernadette was appointed to the VICSES Board in September 2020.

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

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

Bernadette brings strong governance, risk, and strategic planning background from 25 years of experience on private and public sector Boards. She is currently a Board Member of the Victorian Fisheries Authority and the Landtax Hardship Relief Board.

Jane Foley

Jane was appointed to the VICSES Board in August 2021 and currently a member of its People, Culture and Remuneration Committee.

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

She has held diverse board and committee governance roles in commercial and not-for-profit organisations and is currently the Board Chair of Box Hill Institute.

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

Noel Clement OAM

Noel joined the VICSES Board in October 2023.

His experience encompasses a diverse range of social causes, with a particular focus on community health, emergency management and migration (asylum seekers and refugees).

He spent 20 years in senior leadership roles at Australian Red Cross, including as Director of Australian Programs.

Noel's emergency management experience spans local to global levels, across the full spectrum of preparedness, response, and recovery. He has been active in calls for a greater investment in disaster risk reduction and community preparedness.

His response and recovery experience includes major emergencies, including the Bali Bombings (2002), Indian Ocean Tsunami (2004), Black Saturday Bushfires (2009), National Bushfires (2021), and many other significant events.

Noel's other current roles include being Chair of Community Refugee Sponsorship Australia, mentoring and project work through the Social Impact Hub’s Professional Impact Network and teaching across undergraduate and Masters social work courses at RMIT University. He holds a Bachelor of Social Work and a Masters in Social Policy.

Noel was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia 2024 King’s Birthday Honours for his service to the community through charitable organisations.

Shikha Gupta

Shikha Gupta joined the VICSES Board in October 2024 and chairs the Risk and Audit Committee.

Shikha brings over 20 years of experience in institutional investing, leadership, and governance across the public and private sectors. She is Executive Director, Alternatives at the Future Fund, Australia's sovereign wealth fund, where she leads the Alternatives portfolio with responsibility for portfolio construction, manager selection, and strategic investments across alternative strategies.

Previously, Shikha was a Principal at Partners Capital in London, leading public equities research and advising institutional and high-net-worth clients, and a management consultant with the Boston Consulting Group.

Shikha holds a Bachelor of Commerce with First Class Honours (Actuarial Studies) from the University of Melbourne and an MBA (Distinction) from INSEAD and is a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors (GAICD). She also serves on the Foundation Council of Wesley College, where she chairs the Investment Sub-Committee.

Motivated by VICSES' mission to support the community, Shikha is committed to applying her experience in governance, financial management, and strategic oversight to the organisation's vital work of emergency planning, response, and recovery.

Gabrielle Castree

Gabrielle joined the VICSES Board in July 2025.

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

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

VICSES Executive Team

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

Rob Purcell, Chief Executive Officer

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

Rob is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors, has a Graduate Diploma in Business, and in Emergency Management and is a fellow of Leadership Victoria.

Alistair Drayton, Chief Officer Operations

Alistair was formally appointed to the role of Chief Officer Operations in August 2025.

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

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

Kate White, Executive Director Community and Corporate Services

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

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

Debbie Mann, Executive Director People, Safety and Wellbeing

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

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

Silvia Silverii, Chief Information Officer

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

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

Corporate Governance

Statutory Authority, Board, and Structure

Responsible Minister

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

Statutory Authority

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

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

Board responsibilities

The VICSES Board is constituted under the VICSES Act. The Board is accountable to the Minister for Emergency Services. The Board consists of directors appointed by the Governor in Council on the recommendation of the Minister for Emergency Services.

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

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

Board committees

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

Risk and Audit Committee

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

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

People, Culture and Remuneration Committee

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

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

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

Sub-committees at 30 June 2026

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

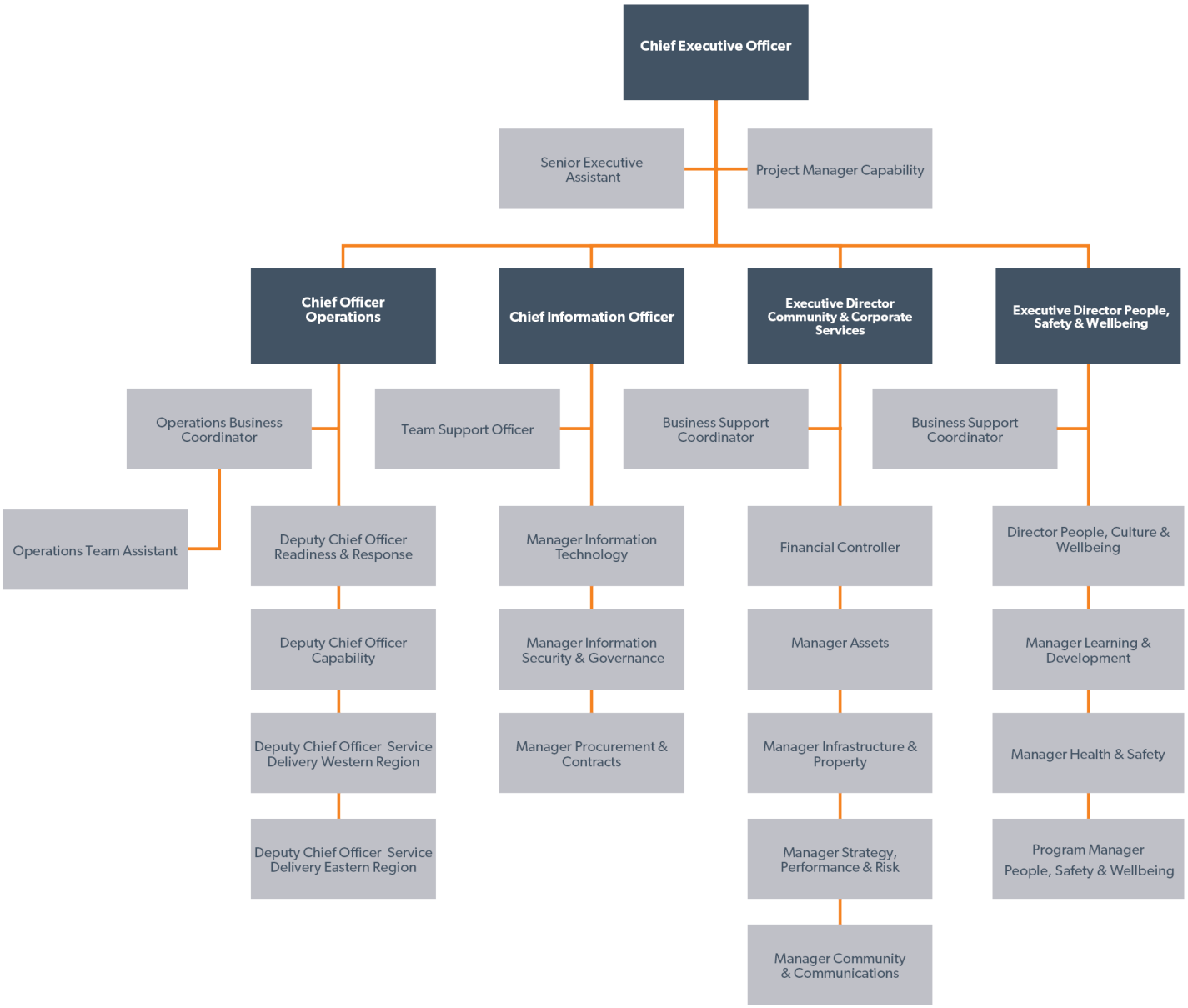
Board of Directors' attendance at meetings

A total of six meetings were held by the Board during the 2025-26 financial year, including five Risk and Audit Committee meetings and four People, Culture and Remuneration Committee meetings.

The below table outlines the attendance by Board Directors:

Board		Board sub-committees	
Board Directors	Board Meetings	Risk and Audit Committee	People, Culture and Remuneration Committee
Jasmine Doak	6		3
Casey Nunn	5	4	
Bernadette Northeast	6		4
Jane Foley	6		4
Noel Clement	6	5	
Shikha Gupta	6	5	
Gabrielle Castree	6	5	

Organisational chart



Consultancies

In 2025-26, there were 10 consultancies where the total fees payable to the consultants were $10,000 or greater. The total expenditure incurred during 2025-26 in relation to these consultancies is $0.718 million (excluding GST). Details of individual consultancies are outlined below.

Consultant	Service	Fees Approved $	Amount Expended 2025-26 $	Future commitments $
Over $10,000				
Obvious Choice	Training Roadmap Consultancy	233,300	233,300	Nil
Nous Group	CBID Warning – Project Delivery Strategy	150,000	150,000	Nil
Scyne Advisory	Op Model, RMF and Risk Appetite Consultancy	82,865	82,865	Nil
Water Technology	Goulburne Broken Flood Intelligence and Levees Arrangements Content Update	79,704	79,704	Nil
Relativity Engineering	Fleet Battery Review	68,165	68,165	Nil
Votar Partners	ERP feasibility Study	37,000	37,000	Nil
HARC	Development of Flood Levee Management Content Guidance	25,870	25,870	Nil
Venus Australia	Review PYP System	16,150	16,150	Nil
Stantec Australia	Flood Intelligence Guidance Review	13,960	13,960	Nil
The Governance Guide	Board Governance Review	10,800	10,800	Nil
Total		717,814	717,814	Nil

Details of consultancies under $10,000

In 2025-26, there were 3 consultants engaged during the year where the total fees payable to the individual consultancies was less than $10,000. The total expenditure incurred during 2025-26 in relation to these consultancies was $19,948 (excl. GST).

Information Communication Technology expenditure

For the 2025-26 reporting period, the Department had a total ICT expenditure of $5.483 million with the details shown below.

Business as usual ICT expenditure	Non BAU	Non BAU Operational	Non BAU capital
Total $m	Total A + B $m	A $m	B $m
4.195	1.288	1.288	0.000

ICT expenditure refers to the VICSES' costs in providing business enabling ICT services within the current reporting period. It comprises Business as Usual (BAU) ICT expenditure and non-business as Usual (Non-BAU) ICT expenditure. Non-BAU ICT expenditure relates to extending or enhancing the Department's current ICT capabilities. BAU ICT expenditure is all remaining ICT expenditure that primarily relates to ongoing activities to operate and maintain the current ICT capability.

Procurement

Emergency procurement: Declared operations

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

Summary of goods and services procured	Total value of goods and services purchased (incl GST)	No. of contracts awarded over $100,000 (incl GST)
See table two below	$410,003	0

Table two: Summary of goods and services procured

Expense category	Excluding GST	Including GST
Communications	$566	$622
Contractors and professional service	$83,719	$92,091
Training and professional development	$2,787	$3,065
Motor vehicles and trucks	$29,784	$32,762
Operational clothing and equipment	$129,473	$142,420
Public relations	$33,437	$36,781
Information technology	$43,928	$48,321
Rent and property services	$15,607	$17,167
Property utilities	$1,000	$1,100
Building/equipment repairs and maintenance	$23,137	$25,450
Other expenses	$118	$130
Printing, postage, stationery and office	$9,176	$10,094
TOTAL	**$372,732**	**$410,003**

Table three: Declared Operations – Emergency Work Order number and descriptions

Event No.	ID	Description	Date
1	501001441	Decops Stage 1 Gippsland - Severe Weather - Severe Weather - Severe Weather	 26 – 30 March 2026 1 – 9 July 2025 10 – 18 February 2025

2	501009160	Decops 25-26 Severe Weather	29 August – 2 September 2025
3	501009161	Decops 25-26 Severe Weather	6 – 8 September 2025
4	501009360	Decops 25-26 Severe Weather	21 – 23 October 2025
5	501009361	Decops 25-26 Severe Weather	26 – 28 October 2025
6	501009357	Decops 25-26 High Risk Weather Season Fire Incident Management Team (IMT)/Regional Control Centre	1 November 2025 – 16 April 2026
7	501009358	Decops 25-26 High Risk Weather Season Fire State Control Centre (SCC)	1 November 2025 – 16 April 2026
8	501009362	Decops 25-26 Severe Weather	21 – 22 December 2025
9	501009359	Decops 25-26 High Risk Weather Season Fire Media	1 November 2025 – 16 April 2026
10	501009364	Decops 25-26 Severe Weather	27 February – 19 March 2026
11	501009363	Decops 25-26 Severe Weather	23 – 27 February 2026
12	501009063	Decops 25-26 Wind Event	25 – 28 July 2025
13	501001443	Decops Stage 1 Hume - Assist Police - Missing person	26 August – 20 November 2025 17 – 27 August 2025
14	501007975	Decops Stage 1 North West Metro - Missing person - Severe Weather	30 November 2025 15 – 16 September 2025
15	501009403	Decops 25-26 Deploy Northern Territory	13 – 30 March 2026
16	501009404	Decops 25-26 Severe Weather	30 June - 6 July 2026
17	501007973	Decops Stage 1 Southern Metro Region Landslide	14 January 2024 – 22 October 2025

Contracts over $100,000 including GST

During 2025-26 there were no contracts over $100,000 including GST related to emergency procurement.

Social procurement

VICSES has a Social Procurement Standard that focuses on three social procurement objectives that best aligns to our strategic plan. These are:

- Opportunities for Victorian Aboriginal people
- Women's equality and safety
- Sustainable Victoria regions

These objectives and processes are incorporated into our internal education programs for procurement.

Key social procurement achievements

The social procurement objectives are addressed either through the evaluation of supplier's response to the recommended 'VGPB Social Procurement Objective' questions (criteria - weighted score) and/or the supplier commitments throughout the engagement.

During 2025-26, our contracts involved women's equality and safety. The VICSES Rescue Vehicle Build project ($15,691,376) involved four suppliers with commitments to be achieved over the course of their contracts. These commitments ranged from supporting female staff to complete their apprenticeships, continue their internal gender equality training, and employ female staff in either permanent or part-time roles

Disclosure of procurement complaints

There were no complaints related to procurement during 2025-26.

Key Performance Measures

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

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

Key performance measures of VICSES

Major outputs, deliverables and/or performance measures		Unit of measure	June 2026 QTR4 YTD		
			Target	Actual	% Variation
Quantity					
1	Permanent operational staff [1,2]	Number	98	122	24.5
2	Permanent support staff [1]	Number	102	115	12.7
3	Volunteers – operational [1,3]	Number	4,904	4,022	-18.0
4	Volunteers – support [1]	Number	246	290	17.9
Quality					
5	Road crash rescue accredited brigades/units [4]	Number	103	105	1.9
6	Level 3 Incident Controller trained staff and volunteers [5]	Number	10	9	-10.0
Timeliness – Road Accident Rescue					
7	Emergency response times meeting benchmarks	Percent	90%	94%	4.4

1. Updates to sector-wide definitions have caused the recategorisation of staff and volunteers from the support category to the operational categories. This has caused variations between the overall targets and actuals for the year.
2. As a result of new funding through the Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund, some staff that were previously classified as fixed term are now classified permanent staff.
3. Excludes non-active and volunteers on leave. Numbers have been impacted by a higher than anticipated members on leave and the implementation of new Fit for Role and member screening requirements.
4. Kyabram Unit received accreditation in June 2026.
5. VICSES continues to invest in its IMT function, noting that progression to accreditation typically takes an extended period.

Financial Year in Review

VICSES delivered its core emergency management services and progressed key budget initiatives during 2025-26, while continuing to invest in its people, assets and capability.

The comprehensive result was a $13.1 million deficit, compared to a $3.7 million deficit in 2024-25. Income increased by $6.2 million while expenditure increased by $15.1 million. The expenditure increases included workforce growth to meet core service demand and deliver budget initiatives, together with higher depreciation and amortisation arising from continued growth of VICSES asset base.

The comprehensive deficit of ($13.1) million comprising:

- Deficit of ($17.1) million depreciation and amortisation
- Surplus of $0.9 million base funded activities
- Surplus of $1.2 million budget initiatives
- Surplus of $1.1 million projects
- Surplus of $0.8 million net gain on non-financial assets.

Five-year financial summary	2025-26[(a)] $m	2024-25 $m	2023-24 $m	2022-23 $m	2021-22 $m
Grant income[(b)]	93.1	87.7	92.7	115.4	76.8
Total income	97.5	91.3	97.0	119.2	78.5
Total expenses	(111.4)	(96.3)	(94.0)	(108.2)	(73.8)
Net result from transactions[(c)]	(13.9)	(5.0)	3.0	11.0	4.7
Comprehensive result	(13.1)	(3.7)	4.4	18.2	5.7
Net cash flow from operating activities	5.6	15.9	7.2	29.1	11.3
Total Assets	384.7	360.8	345.2	329.2	291.5
Total Liabilities	(46.2)	(41.5)	(36.6)	(32.3)	(26.0)
Total Equity	338.5	319.3	308.6	296.9	265.5

Notes:
(a) This table presents data from the current reporting year with comparative data from the past four reporting years.
(b) Income from government includes both output and special appropriations.
(c) The 'net result'' is identical to the 'net operating balance' for the general government sector.

Financial performance – Operating Statement

Income
VICSES received $93.1 million in grant income during 2025-26, primarily comprising $86.6 million from the Department of Justice and Community Safety and $5.8 million from the Transport Accident Commission.

Expenses
Total expenses were $111.4 million, including $51.1 million in employee benefit expenses and $17.1 million in depreciation and amortisation. The increase in expenditure primarily reflected workforce growth, delivery of budget initiatives and higher depreciation associated with the growth of VICSES' asset base.

Financial position – Balance Sheet

Total Assets
Total assets increased by $23.9 million to $384.7 million at 30 June 2026, comprising a $4.3 million increase in financial assets and a $19.6 million increase in non-financial assets. The increase primarily reflects investment in VICSES' operational assets, including land and buildings for new volunteer unit facilities, fleet, plant and equipment.

Capital works in progress increased to $49.4 million at 30 June 2026, compared with $29.0 million in 2024-25, reflecting continued investment in VICSES' infrastructure and operational capability.

Financial assets included $36.5 million held by VICSES volunteer units at 30 June 2026. These balances are consolidated into VICSES' financial statements in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards.

Total Liabilities
Total liabilities increased by $4.7 million to $46.2 million at 30 June 2026. The increase was primarily due to higher payables, lease liabilities and employee-related provisions, partly offset by a reduction in contract liabilities.

Budgetary objectives and achievements

During 2025-26, VICSES continued to deliver its core emergency management services while progressing key government-funded and internally funded initiatives. These included investment in workforce capability, volunteer facilities, fleet, technology and other organisational priorities.

VICSES delivered its key operational performance measures and progressed budget initiatives broadly in line with the objectives approved in the 2025-26 Budget.

SES Volunteer Unit Funds

Cash and investments held by SES units are maintained in independent unit bank accounts and are not available for general VICSES use. SES units act as custodians of public monies and manage unit funds in accordance with VICSES policies and procedures.

There are 146 financial SES units, each maintaining bank accounts under its own Australian Business Number (ABN) and Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) endorsement. Regional and satellite units do not maintain separate bank accounts.

Of the 146 financial units:

- 10% hold balances of less than $100,000
- 51% hold balances between $100,000 and $250,000
- 39% hold balances exceeding $250,000.

Unit funds are used to support local operating needs and to save for significant future expenditure, including fleet, operational equipment, facilities and training. Accumulating sufficient funds for major asset purchases and upgrades can take many years.

VICSES provides annual subsidy funding to units to support operating expenses. Additional subsidy funding was provided to units in 2025-26 as part of the Emergency Services Volunteer Fund (ESVF). Units can also raise funds through grants, fundraising activities and community donations

VICSES supports units to maintain 10-year financial plans that identify planned expenditure, asset replacement and upgrade programs funded from unit reserves.

The Volunteer Emergency Services Equipment Program (VESEP) provides Victorian Government funding to eligible volunteer units to support the purchase of vehicles and equipment and improvements to facilities. Eligible SES units can receive $2 in government funding for every $1 contributed by the unit, up to the applicable grant limit. Unit contributions represent a significant commitment of unit funds towards asset replacement and upgrades.

Unit financial information is consolidated into the VICSES financial statements in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards, while the unit funds remain under the control of the respective independent units.

Operations overview

Regional statistics

Western Region



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

75 units

57 accredited road rescue units

4 regional units

4 satellite units

Supported by 7 Unit Support Teams

Eastern Region



Office locations: Bairnsdale, Benalla, Knox Moe, Chelsea, Wodonga.

71 units

48 accredited road rescue units

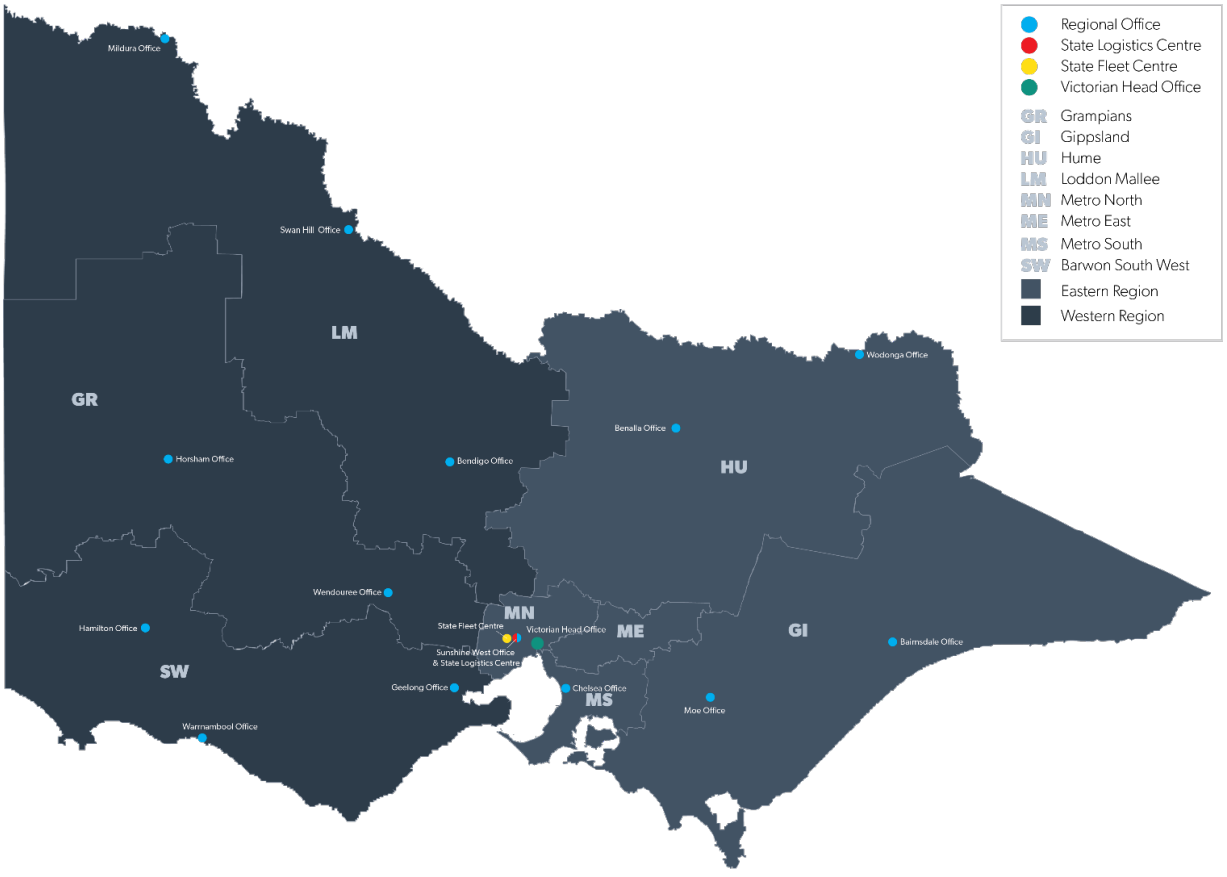
4 regional units

8 satellite units

Supported by 7 Unit Support Teams

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

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



2025-26 Incidents/Hours

		Community	Control agency			Rescue				Support other	
EMR		Community engagement	Flood	Storm	Tsunami, landslide, earthquake	Road	Air, industrial, rail	Standby	Other	Assist agency	Total
Eastern Region	GI	200	93	1,660	8	331	12	7	78	309	**2,698**
		10,880	254	6,945	24	2,193	78	78	286	3,860	**24,598**
	HU	353	198	2,585	11	422	7	5	108	468	**4,157**
		19,203	1,140	10,456	47	3,921	110	189	1,004	14,952	**51,022**
	ME	161	220	2,668	5	222	4	14	78	386	**3,758**
		8,758	841	14,936	29	1,187	15	533	268	3,506	**30,073**
	MS	673	457	4,154	24	380	6	19	228	671	**6,612**
		36,611	1,638	21,283	130	1,404	50	1,220	732	5,664	**68,732**
Western Region	GR	60	71	1,325	5	133	4	2	52	246	**1,898**
		3,264	278	5,297	48	1,032	23	4	1,531	3,742	**15,219**
	LM	176	401	2,108	4	374	6	19	73	357	**3,518**
		9,574	3,484	8,699	5	2,831	30	466	221	5,634	**30,944**
	MN	241	488	4,121	21	273	8	13	215	909	**6,289**
		13,110	1,958	35,858	143	1,127	19	446	525	8,573	**61,759**
	SW	193	95	2,398	12	419	6	24	78	338	**3,563**
		10,499	924	13,048	37	2,473	80	360	673	6,558	**34,652**
ST (State)		16	3	19	0	0	0	0	0	403	**441**
		870	0	49	0	0	0	0	0	1,303	**2,222**
Total		**2,073**	**2,026**	**21,038**	**90**	**2,554**	**53**	**103**	**910**	**4,087**	**32,934**
		112,769	**10,517**	**116,571**	**463**	**16,168**	**405**	**3,296**	**5,240**	**53,792**	**319,221**

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

Incidents/hours comparison (%) by EMR 2025-26



Comparison between 2025-26 and 2024-25 financial years

		Community	Control agency			Rescue				Support other	Total
		Community engagement	Flood	Storm	Tsunami, landslide, earthquake	Road	Air, industrial, rail	Standby	Other	Assist agency	
Incidents	2025-26	2,073	2,026	21,038	90	2,554	53	103	910	4,087	32,934
	2024-25	2,121	2,165	24,188	154	2,532	75	152	932	3,621	35,940
Hours	2025-26	112,769	10,517	116,571	463	16,168	405	3,296	5,240	53,792	319,221
	2024-25	122,382	11,287	132,569	2,619	16,269	944	5,548	5,326	45,430	342,374

Operational terms/category descriptions:

- **Assist agency:** A control agency may request support from VICSES to aid in its response to an emergency. VICSES may provide support such as essential services, personnel (volunteers or staff), or equipment that may contribute to the control agency's management of the emergency.
- **Control agency:** A control agency is the primary agency defined under the State Emergency Management Plan as responsible for responding to and controlling the overall response to a specified type of emergency. VICSES is the control agency for flood, storm, tsunami, earthquake, and landslide emergencies. Further information as follows:
    - The majority of VICSES response activity is related to storm and flood events (approx. 73%).
    - Tsunami, landslide, and earthquake involves VICSES preparing for and responding to damage caused or threatened by more extreme but less frequent natural events.
- **Declared Operations:** Declared Operations are significant events requiring the allocation of resources and personnel for sustained periods to support a response in either a control or support capacity. They are declared by the VICSES Chief Officer Operations (or authorised member).
- **Incident:** An incident is when a VICSES operational member or crew take an action in response to one or more requests for assistance relating to a single emergency at a unique location.
- **Request for assistance (RFA):** A request for VICSES assistance to an incident can be made by a member of the public, another agency, or a VICSES member, and may be made multiple times for a single incident.
- **Rescue:** A rescue incident involves VICSES units responding to undertake or assist in the rescue, for all types of rescue situations and regardless of whether it is the control agency or support agency.
- **Rescue road, air, industrial and rail (RAIR):** The specialist rescue role relating to rescuing persons trapped in road, air, industrial and rail incidents. Only accredited units and brigades can undertake these types of rescues.
- **Rescue road:** The most common subset of RAIR. VICSES provides the largest road rescue network in Australia, with 105 accredited road crash rescue provider units in Victoria.
- **Rescue other**: Includes both domestic and technical rescues such as swift water and high angle (rope) rescues.

Operations of significance

Over the course of 2025-26, VICSES responded to over 32,900 incidents involving over 319,000 person hours. Of these, over 2,550 incidents were in response to road crash rescue and more than 4,080 incidents related to assistance for other agencies, primarily police, fire and ambulance.

The majority of activity fell during the High Risk Weather Season, with the busiest months being October (3,973 incidents) and January (4,633 incidents). This aligned to a severe weather event on 22 October 2025 and a combination of support to the state-wide bushfires that commenced in early January and severe weather on 15 January 2026.

The Chief Officer Operations authorised 23 Declared Operations during the financial year – these being events of significance that go beyond normal day-to-day operational activity and have the potential to be a significant impact on person hours and budget. The following details some of the most significant events that occurred during 2025-26.

Severe weather – 1 July 2025

A large East Coast Low formed off the New South Wales (NSW) coast on Tuesday 1 July, resulting in Victoria experiencing severe weather. This included damaging wind gusts exceeding 110km/h over the alpine peaks as well as moderate to heavy rainfall across Gippsland and into Melbourne before contracting to Gippsland.

VICSES appointed an Incident Controller to support units in the field and manage the large number of warnings issued. The Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) issued several Flood Watches for the eastern catchments. During this Declared Operations period, VICSES received 562 RFAs. 247 of these were for trees down.

Severe weather – 25 July 2025

On Friday 25 July, BOM advised that strong northerly winds ahead of a cold front were likely to produce damaging winds across parts of the Great Dividing Range and southern slopes. Throughout Friday evening, winds continued to strengthen, with Severe Weather Warnings upgraded to include risk of destructive winds in alpine areas. VICSES deployed members into Incident Control Points (ICPs) and into the field across Grampians, Loddon Mallee and Hume regions in support of the response throughout Friday night, with ICP operations expected to continue throughout Saturday 26 July. Over a period of three days VICSES responded to 710 RFAs.

Severe weather – 29 August 2025

On 29 August, damaging wind gusts crossed several of Victoria's weather districts across the state bringing 'destructive' gusts as well as blizzard conditions throughout the alpine region.

During this period VICSES responded to 1,978 incidents. 1,123 of these were for trees down and 259 for building damage. RFAs were spread out across the state, with 131 units actively responding to this event. Units in the far southeast and far southwest received the highest number of RFAs.

Severe weather across Victoria – 15 September 2025

15 September saw damaging winds cross Victoria, with prolonged wind activity leading to a steady increase of RFAs throughout the afternoon. The majority of these requests related to tree hazards

and building damage. The North-West Metro region received a large volume of these requests in a short period of time.

To support operations, units activated multiple ICPs with resourcing and multiple emergency management regions providing units with support.

During this period VICSES responded to 887 incidents. 606 of these where for trees down, and 182 for building damage. The Heidelberg Unit received 109 RFAs over a 24-hour period.

Severe weather – 22 October 2025

On 22 October, severe weather associated with an intense low-pressure system affected Victoria with widespread damaging wind gusts largely confined to southern and mountain areas.

VICSES crews were kept busy with RFAs, mostly relating to trees down (over 1,060) and building damage (over 320). In total,125 units were involved in this event making it one of the most widespread wind events in recent times. Our busiest units included Fawkner (73), Whitehorse (67) and Whittlesea (63). Our busiest region areas included Northern Metro (487), Southern Metro (251), Loddon Mallee (178) and Barwon Southwest (174). In total, VICSES received over 1,475 RFAs in two days.

To support operations, VICSES command activated several Regional Operations Command (ROC) centres, with Incident Control Centres (ICCs) also in place and on recall. The SCC was also operational for this event.

Severe weather including a tornado – 26 October 2025

On 26 October Greater Melbourne experienced damaging winds and heavy rainfall, mainly affecting western suburbs and inner eastern suburbs. Severe thunderstorms continued to develop across the state as the afternoon progressed. Widespread damage resulted from these storms was mainly for building damage, trees down and flooding.

BOM confirmed that at approximately 4:00pm a tornado hit the Wyndham Vale area, travelling in an easterly direction north of the Werribee township before weakening over Hoopers Crossing. VICSES received over 200 RFAs as the storm affected the Wyndham Vale area. The Wyndham Vale Unit responded with support from neighbouring units and local partner agencies.

During the entirety of the event VICSES crews were kept busy with 737 RFAs, mostly relating to building damage, flooding and trees down. Several units were involved in this event with our busiest units being Wyndham (175), Malvern (34), Wyndham West (39) and Port Phillip (24).

To support operations VICSES command activated ROCs, with ICPs also in place. The SCC was also operational for this event.

Severe weather – 21 December 2025

On 21 December the state was impacted by thunderstorms which developed over Victoria, bringing heavy rainfall and strong winds across metropolitan Melbourne and the northeastern suburbs. During this period VICSES received 360 RFAs, mostly relating to trees down and building damage. Wodonga Unit received 34 RFAs and Heidelberg Unit 22 RFAs.

Fire operations support and severe weather – January 2026

On Friday 9 January 2026, CFA declared a Total Fire Ban across the state. Four districts had a fire danger rating of Catastrophic, with the remaining districts classified as Extreme. This marked the first occasion since November 2019 that multiple districts had experienced Catastrophic fire danger ratings simultaneously.

The peak of the event was between 9:00am Tuesday 6 January and 2:00pm Sunday 11 January, with fire agencies issuing a total of 702 public warnings, including 264 Watch and Act warnings, predominantly related to evacuations. Consequently, VICSES took four units offline due to evacuation warnings with several adjacent units limiting operations to Priority 1 (life-threatening) incidents only.

To support the response, interstate and international partner agencies deployed personnel to Victoria, aiding within IMTs and arduous firefighting roles.

Over the night of 8 January, VICSES was additionally impacted by severe thunderstorm activity developed in Victoria, which produced widespread lightning and strong damaging winds. Notably, lightning from around 10,000 strikes sparked fires in Gippsland and the alpine region, contributing to dynamic and rapidly changing fire conditions.

During this period, VICSES received over 1,200 RFAs, predominantly for trees down and building damage. Members responded under challenging conditions, with temperatures exceeding 40 degrees in many areas. VICSES command monitored member wellbeing, with regional staff and the State Operations Communications Coordinator conducting regular check-ins to ensure members had adequate hydration, nutrition, and rest breaks.

On Saturday 10 January, the Victorian Government declared a State of Disaster in 18 Local Government Areas due to the impacts and losses with houses, buildings, livestock and farms.

At the height of the event approximately 100,000 customers were without power statewide.

On 26 January, Victoria Police requested assistance from VICSES to assist with doorknocking to support evacuations in the Otways. At short notice, VICSES deployed 140 members to the Colac ICC to assist with this task. Victoria Police and our fire agency partners greatly appreciated our volunteer's remarkable response, assisting to reach 1,100 properties as part of the evacuation.

Throughout this response period, many VICSES command staff and volunteers were deployed across ICCs. To support with fatigue management the centres implemented a roster of four days on/four days off through to February.

Between 1 January 2026 and 31 March 2026, VICSES responded to 267 incidents and contributed 9,547 hours assisting fire agencies.

Severe weather and flash flooding – 15 January 2026

On Thursday 15 January, areas from Wye River to Lorne along the Great Ocean Road were subject to a deluge of heavy rainfall over a six-hour period. This unprecedented rainfall resulted in flash flooding within the Wye River, Separation Creek, Kennett River and Cumberland River Caravan Park communities. VICSES issued emergency warnings for areas along the Great Ocean Road, and sections of the road were closed.

This flooding resulted in inundation of many campgrounds and buildings with a number of cars and caravans washed out to sea. Along with the local response from VICSES, Ambulance Victoria, CFA, Life Saving Victoria and Victoria Police also assisted in the emergency response.

On the afternoon of 15 January, VICSES transferred control of the incident to the Incident Controller, who was already in place at the Colac ICC for the Otway complex fires. This was in accordance with predetermined plans for managing multiple hazards in a common geographic area. VICSES resumed control on the evening of 16 January after critical emergency response activities subsided.

On Thursday 22 January, VICSES led a large operation to recover the vehicles along the Great Ocean Road in which 14 vehicles and a caravan were recovered. This involved a Black Hawk helicopter winching the damaged cars from the beach and mouths of the Cumberland and Wye Rivers. The Great Ocean Road was closed for several hours during these operations. VICSES subsequently transferred control of this incident to the Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority, to complete the recovery process in its area of responsibility.

Notably, in preparation for the 2025-26 High Risk Weather Season, VICSES brought forward its High Risk Weather Season assurance activities, incorporating additional readiness checks and verification processes. These measures contributed to operational preparedness during this event and have been identified as a successful practice that will be adopted for future High Risk Weather Seasons.

Severe weather – 23 February 2026

Two separate weather systems crossed the state in late February, bringing heavy rainfall, damaging winds, large hail, and thunderstorms to various areas. The western parts of the state and metropolitan Melbourne endured the initial effect, before the systems moved east.

During these periods, Flood Watches and Severe Weather Warnings were issued by BOM. In preparation for these events, VICSES members deployed into Control Centres and worked locally on the ground to support our communities.

Between 23 February and 5 March, VICSES members responded to 1,728 incidents, contributing 9,839 hours of operational activity. Of these incidents, 460 related to flooding and 1,021 to storm damage, with the majority involving trees down. The incidents occurred across the entire state, with Loddon Mallee being the busiest region, recording more than 600 incidents during this period.

Severe weather – 26 March 2026

A low-pressure system crossed Victoria on Thursday 26 March, bringing strong winds and heavy rainfall across the state. VICSES issued Watch and Act warnings for several river catchments in East Gippsland due to the increased risk of flooding.

During this period, VICSES received 506 RFAs. The majority of these requests related to fallen trees and building damage. In response to the elevated demand, more than 100 VICSES units were activated to support communities and manage the operational response.

Severe weather – 30 June 2026

Severe weather associated with the passage of a cold front affected Victoria from 30 June 2026, with the most severe impacts occurring in the northwest and northeast of the state. Due to the likelihood of riverine flooding, VICSES activated readiness arrangements putting IMTs in place. The most significant effects were felt from 1-4 July with some rivers in the northeast reaching the major flood level. VICSES units responded to over 180 RFAs across the state on 30 June. Over the full five-day period, units responded to over 1,030 RFAs including a few water rescue events. Most events occurred in the new financial year but were part of the same declared operation.

Support to Victoria Police for land search events

- **17 August – search for missing person in Marysville area:** VICSES volunteers and staff supported Victoria Police in a search for 62-year-old male in the Marysville area over a 10-day period.

- **26 August – assist Victoria Police with resources:** VICSES supported requests for resource assistance from Victoria Police with the search for a wanted person in the Porepunkah area.

  During this event, our operational staff placed the safety and wellbeing of our members as the highest priority, while also considering the potential psychosocial impacts that may have arisen from the situation. This incident underscored the importance of having an operational staff member actively engaged in the management of high-profile sensitive events, ensuring both safe and effective coordination, together with the appropriate support for personnel involved.

- **Sunday 30 November – search for missing person in Werribee area:** Members from four VICSES units in the North West Metro region assisted Victoria Police with the search for a missing male, last seen Sunday 23 November. Search activity commenced in the Werribee area.

Road crash rescue events

- **27 August – bus rollover:** A school bus rollover occurred around 8:20am in Stonehaven, west of Geelong. The bus rolled when turning on to the Hamilton Highway, with 28 primary and secondary school students on board. VICSES South Barwon and Corio Units responded to this incident, alongside Ambulance Victoria, CFA, FRV, and Victoria Police. Two passengers were trapped, including one fatality. Ambulance Victoria transported 19 passengers to hospital.

- **11 November – road crash rescue:** Ararat Unit responded to a significant road crash rescue event involving a car with four occupants, which had collided with a truck on Mt William Road at Stoneleigh. The Ararat Unit worked to rescue four occupants of the car. Unfortunately, there were three deceased and a fourth airlifted to hospital. Due to the nature of the event, Regional Command supported the units post incident. Arrangements were made for the Bachus Marsh Unit to provide members to relieve the Ararat Unit for 24 hours due to the nature of the event and their sustained operational tempo that the unit has been under.

Interstate deployments

The Northern Territory experienced a much wetter than average wet season, with rainfall from low pressure troughs and Tropical Cyclone Mitchell causing extensive flooding across much of the Northern Territory, affecting property, roads, infrastructure and communities. In addition to the management of the ongoing major flood event, the approach and passage of tropical low 34U (later named Tropical Cyclone Narelle) added complexity to the incident, with the cyclone causing renewed flooding, and required a second evacuation of returned or isolated communities.

Northern Territory requested support from Victoria and other jurisdictions to support fatigued personnel, through the provision of IMT resources. Across two deployments, Victoria provided eight IMT members as part of a multi-agency contingent, including two VICSES volunteers and three VICSES staff.

This was the first deployment of Victorian personnel to the Northern Territory in a decade. It involved operating in a complex and unfamiliar environment, with multiple hazards, remote communities and a spread of resources across geographically vast areas. In addition to unfamiliar systems and arrangements, it required members to gain an understanding of the roles of different agencies in the Northern Territory, as well as indigenous and cultural considerations, providing new and unique experiences for VICSES members. Local staff and volunteers appreciated the support from the Victorian contingent and were able to bring the teams up to speed quickly.

The deployed members provided positive feedback on their experience, as all were able to gain exposure to the Northern Territory way of operating, as well as shared awareness of Victorian systems and an ‘all agencies’ response approach.

The Chief Minister of the Northern Territory and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services expressed her appreciation for the efforts and contributions of the VICSES members across the Northern Territory deployments.

Assist Agency

2025-26 again saw VICSES respond to a record number of events to assist other agencies, recording 4,087 requests, an increase of 11.9%. VICSES members committed over 53,500 person hours in support of these requests.

The largest category was Assist Police with 2,036 requests and over 21,600 person hours.

Assist Fire events increased significantly from 262 in 2024-25, to 435 requests in 2025-26, and more than double the previous year's person hours with over 20,400 hours recorded, spiking in January due to supporting the campaign fire events.

Our People

Volunteers

Our volunteers are the backbone of VICSES, serving the Victorian community 24 hours a day, seven days a week, every day of the year.

Our volunteers are well equipped and trained comprehensively in a wide range of skills to provide on-the ground support during emergencies. This includes natural disasters such as flood, storm, earthquake, tsunami, and landslide, as well as road crash rescue, supporting other agencies in the sector, and assisting their units by undertaking roles such as finance, media, community engagement, and incident management. Our volunteers actively engage directly with communities to support them on how to best prepare for emergencies and minimise the impact of emergencies when they occur.

As at 30 June 2026, VICSES comprised of more than 5,000 active and inactive volunteer members. While our total workforce consolidated from 4,390 active members in June 2025 to 4,312 by June 2026, the real story lies in the intentional, strategic strengthening of our leadership ranks. Over the past 12 months, VICSES has successfully elevated its operational core, celebrating significant growth in key steering roles. Our Unit Controllers increased from 140 to 149, while our Deputy Controllers expanded to 437, ensuring our frontline responders have continued guidance and strategic oversight. Our Section Leaders also saw a boost, growing from 523 to 571 capable hands. This upward momentum in volunteer leadership ensures continued support for our frontline presence, including 2,278 volunteers holding Member Operational positions and a thriving pipeline of 587 Junior and Probationary volunteer members. Complemented by a highly dependable team of 290 support volunteer members, our 2026 volunteer workforce is an exemplary showcase of structured excellence, readiness, and unwavering dedication to protecting lives and property across Victoria.

Breakdown of active volunteers

		2025-26				2024-25			
Status	**Position**	**Female**	**Male**	**Other**	**Total**	**Female**	**Male**	**Other**	**Total**
Operational	Controller	41	108	0	149	39	101	0	140
	Deputy Controller	144	293	0	437	128	281	0	409
	Section Leader	197	372	2	571	174	348	1	523
	Member Operational	695	1,577	6	2,278	731	1,730	7	2,468
	Probationary / Junior	198	385	4	587	203	332	2	537
Support	Member Support	162	125	3	290	174	138	1	313
Total Active		**1,437**	**2,860**	**15**	**4,312**	**1,449**	**2,930**	**11**	**4,390**

Breakdown of non-active volunteers

	2025-26				2024-25			
Non-Active	**Female**	**Male**	**Other**	**Total**	**Female**	**Male**	**Other**	**Total**
Non-active	91	144	0	235	77	149		226
On leave	187	362	2	551	160	262	2	424
Total Non-Active	**278**	**506**	**2**	**786**	**237**	**411**	**2**	**650**

Staff

2025-26 saw our staff continue to deliver services across 17 strategically located offices throughout the state in support of our volunteers, providing units with access to vital equipment, training, and other critical support resources, ensuring all staff and volunteers can effectively serve their local communities. Each office supports a variety of state-wide initiatives, including the delivery of workshops and training, emergency management planning and development, and community resilience-building activities.

As at June 2026, the VICSES staff workforce comprised 242 ongoing, 69 fixed term, and 27 casual employees, equalling 338 staff in total.

As VICSES continues to evolve to meet the needs of communities across the state, our dedicated staff workforce has shown remarkable growth and structural maturity over the past year. The organisation successfully expanded its total permanent staff headcount from 220 to 242, representing a substantial injection of sustained capability. This includes a notable rise in full-time permanent personnel to 225, alongside an increase in part-time permanent roles to 17, offering greater flexibility while maintaining deep institutional knowledge. The true impact of our recruitment strategy is revealed in our Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) metrics. Driven by the strategic shift toward stable, contracted positions and fixed-term roles (which grew to 69), our total FTE surged to 310.4. This robust growth means more dedicated hands behind the scenes, ensuring that VICSES continues to remain strong in face of the changing climate and better equipped than ever to support our volunteers.

A breakdown of our staff member count is as follows:

	2025-26		2024-25	
	Headcount	**FTE**	**Headcount**	**FTE**
Ongoing Full Time	225	225.0	206	206
Ongoing Part Time	17	11.4	14	9.1
Sub-total	**242**	**236.4**	**220**	**215.1**
Fixed Term	69	67.4	67	64
Casual	27	6.6	36*	8.2
Total (all staff)	**338**	**310.4**	**323****	**287.3**

**This has now been updated in line with the current guideline, which excludes casual employees who did not work any hours in the final pay run of the financial year. As a result, the reported headcount has been revised from 81 to 36.*

*** Change in totals from 368 to 323 is due to the same reason explained above.*

The following table provides a breakdown of employee gender, age, and classification as at 30 June 2026:

		2025-26						2024-25					
		Ongoing	FTE	Fixed term	FTE	Casuals	FTE	Ongoing	FTE	Fixed term	FTE	Casuals	FTE
Gender	Male*	126	125.2	38	37.3	17	4.2	114	113	38	37.6	25	5.9
	Female	115	110.6	31	30.1	10	2.4	105	101.5	29	26.4	11	2.3
	Other	1	0.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.6	0	0	0	0.0
Total		**242**	**236.4**	**69**	**67.4**	**27**	**6.6**	**220**	**215**	**67**	**64**	**36**	**8.2**
Age	15-24	3	2.5	1	1.0	2	0.4	2	2	2	2	4	0.6
	25-34	29	28.0	16	16.0	4	1.0	26	25.6	14	12.9	4	1.2
	35-44	76	74.4	18	17.6	3	0.3	72	71.5	17	16.2	6	1.3
	45-54	65	64.5	17	17.0	5	1.3	56	54	20	18.9	10	1.6
	55-64	58	56.3	16	14.8	6	1.2	53	52.3	13	13	6	1.7
	65+	11	10.6	1	1.0	7	2.4	11	9.7	1	1	6	1.8
Total		**242**	**236.4**	**69**	**67.4**	**27**	**6.6**	**220**	**215.1**	**67**	**64**	**36**	**8.2**
Classification	VPS 1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
	VPS 2	16	13.7	1	1.0	8	1.8	16	15	3	2.5	17	3.4
	VPS 3	51	49.7	13	12.5	16	3.4	43	41.1	23	21.5	15	2.6
	VPS 4	82	80.4	26	25.6	2	1.0	81	79	22	21	1	0.9
	VPS 5	56	55.5	17	16.5	0	0.0	52	52	7	7	2	1.0
	VPS 6	32	32.0	4	3.8	1	0.4	25	25	4	4	1	0.3
	VPS 7	3	3.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	3	0	0	0	0.0
	Executive	2	2.0	8	8.0	0	0.0	0	0	8	8	0	0.0
Total		**242**	**236.4**	**69**	**67.4**	**27**	**6.6**	**220**	**215.1**	**67**	**64**	**36****	**8.2**

** The transposed male and female row labels in the 2024-25 table have been corrected in the current report. All underlying data and analysis remain unchanged.*

***The headcount of casual employees has now been updated in line with the current guideline, which excludes casual employees who did not work any hours in the final pay run of the financial year. As a result, the reported total headcount has been revised from 81 to 36.*

No employee was acting in a senior role in a long-term arrangement as at the last full pay period in June 2026.

No senior employees were positioned part-time as at the last full pay period in June 2026.

Breakdown of income bands among senior staff members

		$180,000 - $199,999	$200,000 - $219,999	$220,000 - $239,999	$240,000 - $259,999	$260,000 - $279,999	$280,000 - $299,999	$300,000 - $319,999	$340,000 - $359,999	$480,000 - $499,999
Classification (Senior members)	VPS 7	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Exec	0	0	2	1	1	1	3	1	1
Total	**13**	**1**	**2**	**2**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**3**	**1**	**1**

NOTE: VICSES is established under the Victoria State Emergency Service Act 2005 as a statutory authority. For the purposes of the FMA, it is treated as a public body, not a department. Consequently, additional reporting requirements for Executives as stated in FRD15 do not apply.

Application of employment and conduct principles

VICSES is committed to applying employment and conduct principles that promote merit, fairness, integrity, respect and accountability across all employment practices. These principles are embedded through organisational policies, recruitment and selection processes, performance and development practices, leadership capability initiatives and employee conduct expectations.

Workforce classification

VICSES confirms that all employees have been correctly classified in workforce data collections in accordance with the applicable Victorian Public Sector classification framework and the VICSES Enterprise Agreement.

Industrial relations

Towards the beginning of the financial year, VICSES' Enterprise Agreement 2024 was approved by the Fair Work Commission. This agreement had been negotiated with employees and the Community and Public Sector Union during the 2024-25 financial year. No time was lost through industrial actions or disputes during this financial year.

Our Business

People and Culture

In 2025-26, VICSES continued to invest in building a capable, inclusive and future-focused workforce, recognising that our people are central to delivering services to communities across Victoria. Throughout the year, initiatives focused on strengthening leadership capability, improving the employee and volunteer experience, and building the foundations for a sustainable workforce.

Leadership capability remained a key priority across both volunteer and staff workforces. The LEAD leadership development program progressed throughout the year, with a total of 64 volunteers and 50 staff having now completed the five-month program. The program supports leaders to deepen self-awareness, develop contemporary leadership practices and build the skills required to lead effectively in a complex emergency management environment. To extend learning beyond the formal program, the LEAD Alumni Peer Knowledge Network was established, creating opportunities for participants to share experiences, build relationships and continue developing leadership capability across the organisation.

Volunteer leadership development was further enhanced through the introduction of the Unit Controller Mentoring Program which is currently being piloted. The program pairs experienced volunteer leaders with new Unit Controllers to build leadership capability, knowledge sharing and succession planning, helping to ensure local leadership capability is sustained into the future.

Investment in organisational culture included ‘Above the Line/Below the Line’ facilitated sessions and unit culture surveys. These initiatives support constructive conversations within teams, encourage shared accountability and identify practical actions to strengthen local culture and member experience.

Work progressed to enhance VICSES’ approach to psychosocial safety, further aligning organisational initiatives with the Occupational Health and Safety (Psychological Health) Regulations 2025. Through close collaboration across the People, Safety and Wellbeing directorate, work progressed to enhance a coordinated, organisation-wide approach to identifying, preventing and managing psychosocial risks.

Work also commenced on the development of a Volunteer Recruitment and Retention Plan to provide a coordinated, evidence-based approach to attracting, engaging and retaining volunteers. The plan will be informed by workforce insights and member feedback to better understand the changing expectations of volunteering and identify opportunities to strengthen recruitment, improve member experience and support long-term workforce sustainability.

Complementing this work, the volunteer recruitment website was refreshed to improve the recruitment experience and provide prospective volunteers with clearer information about volunteering opportunities, including updated role descriptions and new promotional videos. A billboard campaign and community radio advertising further promoted volunteering opportunities across regional Victoria, while a new partnership with the La Trobe University Aspire Program will help introduce younger people to volunteering and emergency management.

Creating a safe, respectful and inclusive environment for all members remained a key organisational priority. Significant work was undertaken to implement mandatory Working with Children Checks for all staff and volunteers, strengthening safeguarding arrangements and reinforcing community confidence in the organisation.

The experience of new employees was also enhanced through the introduction of a refreshed staff induction program. The program provides a more consistent onboarding experience, building understanding of VICSES, its values and the important role staff play in supporting volunteers, operational capability and community outcomes.

Insights from the annual People Matter Survey and other workforce data informed organisational priorities and improvement initiatives. Together, these programs demonstrate VICSES' ongoing commitment to developing capable leaders, supporting a positive workplace culture and ensuring the organisation remains well positioned to meet the evolving needs of the Victorian community.

Gender Equality Action Plan

VICSES is committed to building a safe, inclusive, and equitable emergency service, one where every employee and volunteer can contribute, lead, belong and thrive. Our 2026 Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP), submitted to the Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector in June 2026, builds on the progress made through our 2022 GEAP and sets the direction for the next phase of our work. It focuses on embedding gender equality into leadership, organisational practices and culture, while strengthening accountability and creating opportunities for our people to succeed.

Our 2025 Gender Audit confirms that VICSES has made meaningful progress since our first GEAP in 2022. Key achievements include:

- Women represent 46.2% of our workforce and 46.5% of senior leaders, including 62.5% of the Executive team.
- Our gender pay gap is among the lowest in the sector, with a mean base salary gap of just 1.3, reflecting strong pay equity across the organisation.
- Women now make up 35.8% of our operational frontline workforce, demonstrating continued progress in traditionally male-dominated roles
- Men represented 67% of parental leave takers in 2025, demonstrating growing uptake of parental leave across genders and supporting shared caring responsibilities.
- Flexible work is well supported across the organisation, with 91% of women and 77% of men reporting confidence that flexible work requests would be considered fairly.

While our foundations are strong, the audit and consultation with our people show there is more work to do to ensure gender equality is experienced consistently across the organisation. Over the next four years, we will focus on three key areas:

- A safe and inclusive culture: Continuing to build respectful, inclusive, and psychologically safe workplaces where people feel supported, valued, and able to contribute.
- Equitable access to opportunity: Strengthening attraction, recruitment, development, and leadership pathways, particularly in operational and technical roles.
- Strong accountability and informed decision making: Improving how we collect, analyse, and use workforce data, strengthening our capability to understand different experiences and outcomes across the workforce through an intersectional lens, increasing transparency, and regularly monitoring and reporting progress to ensure our actions are making a meaningful difference.

Focus Area	2025 Baseline	Target
Women in operational frontline roles	35.8%	Increase toward 40% by 2030
Women in operational leadership roles	33%	Increase toward 40% by 2030
Perception that promotion is fair	42% (women)	Improve toward 60% by 2030
Mean base salary gender pay gap	1.3%	Maintain within ±3%

Senior leader total remuneration gap	7.2%	Reduce toward ±5% by 2030

Honours and Awards Program

Recognition plays an important role in celebrating the commitment, professionalism and service of VICSES members. While our volunteers and staff do not serve for recognition, acknowledging exceptional contribution reinforces the values that define our organisation, celebrates the many forms of service that strengthen our capability, and reminds members that their dedication is seen and valued. Whether recognising a single act of courage, decades of sustained commitment, or the countless behind-the-scenes contributions that enable our operational success, the Honours and Awards Program helps preserve the stories of service that inspire others and strengthen the culture of recognition across VICSES.

During 2025-26, a total of 1,909 awards and honours were presented to VICSES members in recognition of their outstanding service and achievement. This included 611 Long Service Awards, 128 National Medals and Clasps, three National Emergency Medals, four Emergency Services Medals, and 1,158 other awards, including Commendations, Unit Life Memberships, Excellence Awards, Storm and Flood Response Pins, NSW SES Citations, Order of Australia honours and a range of local recognition awards.

The year also saw the presentation of several of VICSES' highest honours. Three new VICSES Life Members were recognised for more than 20 years of exceptional service, leadership and lasting contribution to the organisation, reflecting the highest standards of commitment and embodying the values of VICSES. Eight Commendations for Service, one of the organisation's most prestigious and rarely conferred awards, were presented in recognition of outstanding operational performance and exemplary service to the community. These honours reflect the extraordinary commitment demonstrated by our members every day and reinforce the importance of recognising those whose service has had a profound and lasting impact on VICSES and the communities we serve.

Wellbeing Services and Support

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

VICSES applies an integrated, three-tiered model: Protect, promote, and respond, to address psychosocial risk across the organisation:

- **Protect**: Reducing workplace risks by identifying and addressing hazards such as high workload, fatigue, traumatic exposure, and role ambiguity. We have developed a Psychological Health and Safety Policy to guide sustainable practices and align our psychosocial risk management with regulatory standards.
- **Promote:** Actively build protective factors and promote psychological wellbeing through training, peer connection, leadership development, and targeted health programs.
- **Respond:** Early intervention remains a cornerstone of our model, ensuring that volunteers and staff can access timely and appropriate support through our stepped care approach.

Support services with impact

VICSES continues to expand our internal support capacity to meet rising demand, with a 36% increase in service appointments this past year. Through 1,336 individual sessions (delivered via

face-to-face, phone, and telehealth) our multidisciplinary clinical team (including the Mental Health Duty Officer function) and Peer Support network ensured tailored responses to emerging needs.

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

VICSES is proactively managing psychosocial risk through initiatives such as the MindFit AVSMART 2.0 program, which provides confidential one-on-one wellbeing check-ins with qualified clinicians. To date, 351 assessments have been completed across general members and leadership roles, supporting early intervention, reducing stigma, and strengthening psychological safety across the organisation.

During this reporting period, delivery capacity for AVSMART 2.0 and broader wellbeing services was impacted by a reduction in clinical workforce capacity, with the team operating with two Mental Health Clinicians undertaking dual roles that included both clinical service delivery and business partnership responsibilities. This reduction in dedicated clinical capacity affected the ability to maintain planned delivery levels and expand proactive wellbeing activities. Despite these challenges, AVSMART 2.0 has continued to provide valuable support to members, with de-identified insights informing broader wellbeing strategies and ongoing improvements to accessibility, leadership engagement, and integration into routine wellbeing practices.

Empowering Peer Support

The Peer Support Program has undergone structural improvements to bolster leadership, governance, and state-wide coordination. With 80 trained Peer Support Officers and a new region-based leadership model, VICSES is better positioned to deliver proactive and responsive support, particularly following potentially traumatic events.

Increased presentation complexity to Peer Support has contributed to higher demand for Mental Health Clinician support, with clinician activity increasing by 62.64% and hours by 17.29%. This indicates more Peer Support and Mental Health Duty Officer contacts are requiring referral for ongoing clinical care, reinforcing the need for sustainable clinical capacity to support early intervention and complex member wellbeing needs. This year, 85% of units received updated, tailored pre-incident awareness sessions designed to support members to anticipate, understand and manage stress before, during and after operational exposure. The program underwent a significant uplift, incorporating contemporary evidence-informed content, enhanced delivery approaches and stronger alignment with VICSES psychosocial risk priorities. These improvements have strengthened preventative wellbeing support, increased member preparedness, and enhanced capability to identify and manage psychosocial risks associated with operational activities.

Training to build psychosocial safety capability

A core component of our psychosocial risk strategy is building the capability of our workforce through mental health literacy and education. Mental health literacy is currently being strengthened through programs such as The Working Mind First Responder, which has been delivered to 790 participants across leadership and primary courses. The training aims to reduce stigma, encourage open conversations about mental health, and equip leaders with the knowledge and skills to foster psychologically safe and supportive team environments.

To ensure our approach remains current, relevant, and accessible to all members, VICSES will review mental health literacy providers during 2026-27. This review will assess available programs against organisational needs and emerging best practice to support the ongoing development of member wellbeing and psychosocial capability.

VICSES has also rolled out Psychological First Aid training via the online Training Portal, completed by over 269 members, with the aim of further embedding psychosocial awareness into our operational readiness. The VICSES Wellbeing Support and Services team is developing a tailored Psychological First Aid program designed specifically for VICSES members. This initiative aims to enhance

engagement by providing role-relevant psychosocial education and practical strategies that support members' wellbeing before, during, and after exposure to potentially traumatic events. By aligning Psychological First Aid principles with the unique operational context of VICSES, the program seeks to strengthen psychosocial awareness and resilience across the organisation.

In response to emerging organisational needs associated with member exposure to potentially traumatic events, the Ready, Respond, Recover (Triple R) program was developed. The program provides a structured framework to support staff before, during, and after exposure to traumatic incidents, promoting psychological wellbeing and organisational resilience.

To address critical psychosocial and physical risk factors, the Wellbeing and Healthwatch Programs delivered 56 wellbeing program visits to VICSES units across the state during the 2025-26 financial year. These sessions focused on key health and wellbeing priorities, including fatigue management, sleep, nutrition, stress management, operational movement, and physical fitness for role familiarisation, reaching almost 1,000 participants. Each initiative was directly aligned with identified organisational risks, supporting a proactive approach to prevention, early intervention, and resilience-building.

During the period workforce capacity has been strengthened, with a new program lead and six casual staff onboarded to support increased program demand and improve the consistency and accessibility of wellbeing services across the organisation.

A framework for the future: Psychological Health and Safety of Command Function Roles

VICSES is well underway in embedding a comprehensive Psychosocial Risk Management Framework, underpinned by the Psychological Health and Safety Policy. This strategic approach is strengthening the way psychosocial hazards are identified, assessed, controlled, and monitored, ensuring they are managed with the same rigour and consistency as physical health and safety risks.

During 2025-26, VICSES has continued to refine and mature its approach through the review of existing practices, strengthening governance, improving compliance monitoring, and integrating psychosocial risk considerations into business-as-usual processes. This includes enhancing reporting mechanisms, reviewing controls, and working collaboratively across the organisation to ensure psychosocial risk management remains practical, relevant, and aligned with operational needs.

As part of this ongoing approach, VICSES partnered with Phoenix Australia to deliver the Psychological Health and Safety of Command Function Roles project.

The project intends to understand the facilitators and barriers to physical and psychological health of the command functions within VICSES. It aims to identify areas of command roles that may benefit from improved work design through identification of risks to worker health and wellbeing. The outcomes will be used to create an effective system of work, through the lifecycle of employment; Recruitment, on-boarding, employment span, and transition. This includes improvements in job design, understanding of resourcing requirements, recruitment and selection processes, increased retention in command roles, clear induction and on-boarding practices, and identification of specialist professional development or training packages. It will assist with informing and supporting return to work for work and non-work-related injury or illness and diversity and inclusion strategies.

Project scope:

- Phase 1: Project Establishment (1-2 months)
- Phase 2: Desktop Review and Environmental Scan (1-2 months)
- Phase 3: Consultation (1-2 months)
- Phase 4: Development of a Psychosocial Risk Model (2 months)
- Phase 5: Pilot and Evaluation (5 months)
- Phase 6: Final Report (2 months)

- Total cost: (ex GST): $252,000.00
- Expected completion: 31 December 2026

The overall and long-term desired outcome of this project is that the psychological health and safety of VICSES workers is strengthened and improved through the appropriate and most effective use of best practice and fit-for-purpose psychosocial risk management and job design. VICSES workers who undertake command roles are a relatively select group within the sector. The roles they perform in these settings are secondary to their day-to-day role which may or may not have similar functions. With greater understanding of the job requirements for command roles, improved recruitment, retention and productivity, the organisation will benefit through the ability to productively utilise finite resources, decrease the risks associated with burnout and the ability to adapt to future and changing requirements. This project also has the greater ability for increased safety, diversity and inclusion in command roles.

Project findings will become available to all members once the research is completed. Additionally, this project will provide an opportunity to share findings and job design activities to these agencies via a number of forums. This includes the Emergency Services Foundation Learning Network, Australasian Fire Authorities Council (AFAC) Mental Health and Wellbeing Network, and the potential to share learnings through specific emergency service conference opportunities.

Looking ahead, priorities include:

- Continuing to embed psychosocial risk considerations into operational planning, role design, and workforce practices.
- Enhancing data analytics and reporting capability to identify trends, monitor controls, and support proactive interventions.
- Continuing to co-design solutions with business areas to ensure strategies are practical, targeted, and effective.
- Building leadership capability to identify, manage, and respond to psychosocial risks within teams.
- Ongoing review and continuous improvement of psychosocial risk management practices to ensure alignment with legislative obligations, organisational needs, and emerging best practice.

Health and Safety

Health and safety remained a strategic priority for VICSES throughout 2025-26, reflecting our core value that *Safety Drives Our Decisions*. The organisation strengthened safety governance, consultation and assurance processes while supporting the health and wellbeing of staff and volunteers operating in increasingly complex environments.

Key achievements included enhanced investigation practices, reduced fatigue risks, Minimum Physical Fitness for Role programs implemented, stronger health and safety consultation, improved oversight of corrective actions, and greater organisational learning. Continued focus on psychosocial risks, workforce wellbeing and emergency preparedness further strengthened VICSES' ability to identify, manage and learn from risk.

These initiatives have strengthened health and safety capability across the organisation, providing a strong foundation to support staff, volunteers and the delivery of essential services to Victorian communities.

Statewide Health and Safety Report

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

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

In 2025-26 a total of 605 incidents and hazards were recorded, comprising 442 incidents and 163 hazards. This reflects a slight decrease from the 647 reports recorded in 2024-25 but reflects a strong hazard reporting rate of 3.53. After several years of decreasing claims numbers, the 2025-26 financial year has experienced an increase in claims. Notwithstanding this trend, the continued investment in early intervention and person-centred case management has helped contain average claims costs, demonstrated by the effectiveness of the VICSES injury management approach. This trend occurred in another busy year for VICSES responding to more than 32,900 operational incidents across Victoria, internal organisational change and amidst legislation changes that increase the focus on psychological health and associated workers compensation claims.

Year	2021 - 2022	2022 - 2023	2023 - 2024	2024 - 2025	2025 - 2026
Number of incidents and hazards	459	448	633	647	605
Hazard reporting rate*	2.36	3.69	3.80	3.72	3.53
Incident reporting rate*	8.93	8.03	8.29	8.25	9.56
Number of standard claims	2	7	8	5	9
Number of lost time claims	20	12	17	11	22
Total claims	22	19	25	16	31
Average cost per standard claim**	$18,739.43	$5,318	$8,372	$7,656	$10,478.98
Average cost per standard mental injury claim**	$49,264.06	$165,924	$8,704	$5,037	$24,116.43
Claims reporting rate (Standard)*	0.05	0.18	0.15	0.09	0.19
Claims reporting rate (Lost time)*	0.49	0.31	0.32	0.20	0.48
Mental injury claims* reporting rate	0.15	0.13	0.06	0.04	0.11
Fatality claims	0	0	0	0	0

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

*** Calculated on actual cost*

Strengthening safety governance and assurance

Safety Drives Our Decisions

The Safety Drives Our Decisions commitment continued to underpin health and safety activities across VICSES during 2025-26. Rather than introducing new campaigns, the focus shifted towards embedding safety into organisational systems, governance and operational practices. Improvements to incident investigations, workplace inspections, emergency planning, fatigue management and psychosocial risk management demonstrate a growing maturity in how safety considerations are identified, assessed and incorporated into decision making. Throughout the year, consultation with volunteers and staff remained central to the design and implementation of health and safety initiatives, supporting a culture where safety is valued, discussed and continually improved

Enhancing investigations

VICSES implemented significant improvements to investigation governance during 2025-26 to strengthen accountability, consistency and organisational learning. A revised investigation model introduced risk-based triage, executive oversight of significant events and enhanced monitoring of investigation quality and timeliness. Weekly reviews of incidents and hazards supported the early identification of emerging risks, improved visibility of corrective actions and strengthened assurance that lessons identified were translated into meaningful improvements across the organisation. These changes have enhanced VICSES' ability to learn from events and proactively manage safety risks.

Safety Management System

VICSES undertook activities to evaluate and strengthen its Safety Management System in alignment with recognised health and safety management principles, including ISO 45001. These activities identified opportunities to enhance safety practices and governance arrangements, with outcomes informing future business planning and continuous improvement initiatives.

Health and Safety Representatives and committees: Growth and improvements

Throughout 2025-26 VICSES continued strengthening consultation arrangements through Health and Safety Committees, Health and Safety Representatives and local safety delegates. By the second half of the year, Health and Safety Representative representation had expanded significantly, leaving only a small number of vacancies across the state and increasing worker participation in health and safety decision making. Improvements to committee structures and consultation processes were also developed to strengthen compliance with occupational health and safety obligations and improve communication between workers, volunteers and the service.

Improving Hazard and Risk Management

Workplace inspection and emergency planning uplift

During 2025-26, VICSES enhanced its workplace inspection program through the introduction of simplified inspection tools, updated compliance requirements and integration of emergency planning activities. These improvements reduced administrative burden while strengthening hazard identification, consistency and unit-level engagement. Implementation was supported by consultation, training and direct engagement with volunteer units and staff. The updated approach also increased visibility of local safety risks and supported more consistent identification and management of hazards across VICSES facilities and operations.

Managing Workforce Health and Wellbeing

Fatigue management improvements

Throughout the year VICSES increased its focus on work hours and fatigue management. Consultation on a staff work hours management framework progressed while enhanced monitoring and leadership engagement contributed to a reduction in fatigue breaches, particularly those relating to minimum rest periods between shifts. Fatigue management performance improved significantly during the second half of the year. This improvement reflects increased organisational awareness of fatigue risks and stronger management of work and operational demands

Psychosocial Health

VICSES continued to strengthen its approach to psychosocial health and psychological safety throughout 2025-26. Increased reporting and claim activity provided greater visibility of psychosocial risks and reinforced the importance of proactive wellbeing initiatives, mental health literacy, psychological safety training and early intervention programs. Psychosocial hazards accounted for approximately 10.5% of all hazards reported during the year, providing valuable insight into workforce wellbeing risks and supporting more targeted prevention and intervention initiatives. Activities including The Working Mind First Responder training, Psychological First Aid training, peer support

and proactive wellbeing programs continued to build organisational capability in supporting mental health and wellbeing.

Workers' compensation trends

VICSES continued to prioritise recovery at work through early intervention, timely support and collaboration with employees, volunteers, managers and treating practitioners to achieve positive recovery outcomes. Early intervention initiatives, including proactive contact, treatment support and return to work planning, continued to support recovery and help manage claim duration and associated costs. While these measures contribute to improved recovery outcomes, they do not address the underlying psychosocial factors that may contribute to workplace injuries.
During 2025-26, workers compensation activity reflected the increasing significance of psychological injuries across the emergency management sector. VICSES recorded an increase in workers compensation claims compared with the previous financial year. While this may in part reflect greater confidence in reporting workplace injuries, it also highlights the importance of continuing to strengthen psychosocial risk management and preventative initiatives across the organisation.

Minimum Physical Fitness for Role

VICSES, in partnership with SES agencies from across Australia, has developed and implemented a nationally agreed approach to understand the minimum level of physical fitness that members need to have to safely undertake the operational activities that they perform. This is the National Physical Fitness for Role Program. In 2025-26 VICSES achieved full implementation of minimum fitness for role assessments for certain roles with 3,715 members with current assessments, ensuring they are part of requirement and training and assessment for members to being or continue performing roles.

The program provides VICSES with enhanced visibility of operational capability across the organisation, supporting workforce planning, resource allocation and preparedness for emergency response activities. Minimum Physical Fitness for Role remains a key control for reducing the risk of injury associated with physically demanding operational tasks and supports the safe and sustainable participation of members in emergency management activities.

Learning, Assurance and Continuous Improvement

Organisational learning

VICSES continued to strengthen organisational learning by using incident, hazard, investigation and assurance information to identify systemic issues and opportunities for improvement. Safety alerts, lessons identified and targeted communications ensured learning from incidents was shared across the organisation. A number of risks identified during the year resulted in state-wide reviews and control improvements, including equipment management, vehicle safety, chainsaw operations, manual handling activities and fatigue management. This proactive approach supported continuous improvement and reinforced the principle that learning from experience is essential to preventing future harm.

State-level oversight

Throughout 2025-26, VICSES strengthened state-level oversight of health and safety performance through enhanced reporting, governance and assurance activities. Regular review of incidents, hazards, investigations and corrective actions enabled emerging risks to be identified earlier and provided greater visibility of safety performance across the organisation. This oversight supported informed decision-making, improved accountability and ensured resources could be directed towards areas of greatest risk and organisational need.

Improvement actions and assurance activities

VICSES continued to focus on improving the timely completion and effectiveness of corrective actions arising from incidents, hazards, inspections, audits and investigations. Targeted assurance activities throughout the year examined the effectiveness of key risk controls and supported ongoing compliance with legislative requirements and organisational standards. Work undertaken through workplace inspections, emergency planning reviews, regulatory engagements and the review of the

Safety Management System provided valuable opportunities to validate controls, strengthen risk management practices and drive continuous improvement across the organisation.

Capability Framework

Identified in the 2023-27 Strategic Plan, the Capability Framework initiative commenced in August 2025. It strengthens how VICSES builds, sustains and assures the capabilities Victorian communities rely on. More than 150 volunteer units deliver services statewide, working alongside operational and corporate staff in command, incident management and community engagement roles. Every directorate supports this effort, through the people, training, equipment, information and facilities capability depends on. The framework draws established practice from across the organisation into one consistent system – much of how we work continues, now connected by common standards and a shared way of working.

Phase one has focused on developing the framework itself, informed by experience across the emergency management, defence and broader public sectors. Drafts have been developed and refined through rounds of review and engagement with a network of volunteers and staff from across the organisation. The framework establishes the architecture for one consistent system: a map of what VICSES holds and where, clear standards set for each capability and an annual, evidence-based assessment that directs investment where it matters most. Work is already under way on the first building block – a single catalogue of VICSES' capabilities statewide.

Emergency events are predicted to become more frequent and intense in the coming years with the geography of risk shifting across Victoria. The framework positions VICSES to plan ahead of that change – building the capabilities communities will need, where they will need them, and aligned to our legislative responsibilities. Endorsement by the Executive Leadership Team is expected in the first quarter of the 2026-27 financial year. Implementation is a multi-year program, embedding an annual cycle of evidence-based assessment and investment across the organisation. It will draw on new digital tools and richer data, keeping pace with developments across the sector. Our capability picture will strengthen with each cycle, building to a complete and confident statewide position over the first three cycles.

Operations

Road Crash Rescue

In a demanding year for road crash rescue in Victoria, VICSES responded to 2,554 road crash rescue incidents in 2025-26; one of the highest annual totals on record. While road crash rescue incidents have continued their long-term upward trend, there has been a notable increase in heavy vehicle crashes and complex rescue operations, placing additional demands on volunteers and resources.

Despite these challenges, VICSES has continued to meet its key performance indicator for crew response times, ensuring timely assistance for communities across the state.

On 2 June 2026, the Emergency Management Commissioner approved the Kyabram Unit to become the 105th VICSES Principal Road Crash Rescue Provider. This milestone has strengthened road crash rescue capability in Kyabram and surrounding communities, improving local response capacity and helping ensure faster access to specialist rescue services when they are needed most.

Road Rescue Capability Assessments

2025-26 was another significant year for Road Rescue Capability Assessments, with 33 assessments completed across Victoria. These assessments are conducted by qualified assessors and help ensure units maintain the skills, equipment and operational readiness required to deliver safe and effective road rescue services to their communities.

During the period, VICSES implemented an organisational restructure that repositioned the Capability Improvement Team within a different functional area of State Operations. As part of this change, VICSES established the Operations Manager – RAIR role within the Readiness and

Response team. A new role of Operations Officer RAIR also reports to the Operations Manager role to strengthen oversight and support of specialist rescue capabilities.

Casual Capability Assessors were also incorporated into the new structure, improving alignment, governance and support for members across the state. While the new operating model remains in its early stages, it has already created opportunities for greater collaboration, consistency and capability development, with further benefits expected to be realised in the coming financial year.

Supported by the new organisational structure, the Road Rescue Capability Assessment program continued to work closely with units, Unit Support Teams, and learning and development personnel. This is to ensure units met the minimum capability requirements outlined in the Road Crash Rescue Arrangements. A key strength of the program is the collection and analysis of assessment data, which identifies capability trends and areas for improvement across the state. These insights inform skill maintenance activities and targeted capability enhancement workshops, helping to build and sustain members' skills, knowledge and operational readiness.

The 2026-27 Road Rescue Capability Assessment schedule has now been released, commencing in September with the Cann River Unit. Units scheduled for assessment in 2027-28 and 2028-29 have also been provided with visibility of their projected assessment timeframes, supporting forward planning and preparedness. The Operations Readiness team continues to improve transparency around assessment scheduling and outcomes, with key information now available through the new VICSES RAIR intranet pages.

Women in Rescue 2026

On 21 March 2026, over 300 women and gender-diverse VICSES volunteers took part in the Women in Rescue program, a statewide, volunteer led training initiative delivered across all eight Emergency Management Regions. The event provided hands-on, inclusive training to build skills, confidence, and teamwork, while strengthening collaboration with partner agencies. A highlight for 2026 was the addition of an overnight missing person search in the Loddon Mallee Region, in addition to collaboration with partner agencies including Ambulance Victoria, CFA, Rescue Dogs Australia, and Victoria Police

The Women in Rescue program continues to support VICSES priorities by enhancing:

- Operational capability
- Inclusion
- Leadership development
- Member retention
- Safe opportunities for participants to grow, connect and succeed in their roles

Senior VICSES leaders also attended demonstrating their commitment to this event, including members of the VICSES Executive Leadership Team and Board. Leaders from EMV and local members of Parliament also attended to demonstrate their on-going commitment.

Parliamentary Inquiry into the 2026 summer fires across Victoria

On Tuesday 21 April 2026, the VICSES Chief Officer Operations along with the VICSES Lorne Unit Controller appeared at a hearing of the Parliament of Victoria's Legislative Council Environment and Planning Committee's Inquiry into the 2026 summer fires across Victoria. VICSES appeared along with representatives from CFA and DEECA.

Of interest to the committee was the VICSES led response to the severe weather event that occurred in the Otways and communities along the Great Ocean Road on 15 January 2026. This event occurred in parallel with fires in the Otways and during peak holiday season. The resultant flash-

flooding caused considerable damage to property and disruption, but no significant injury or loss of life. The fact that this event occurred in parallel with the fires challenged Victoria's capability to respond to different but concurrent emergencies, which is a growing challenge in the face of increasing severe weather events influenced by climate change.

Operational Training Roadmap

VICSES has developed a new Operational Training Roadmap to strengthen training and build long-term operational capability. The roadmap provides a clear, evidence-based plan that outlines key priorities, the sequence of delivery, and organisational responsibilities. It is designed to create a sustainable training system that supports members to develop, maintain and apply the skills needed to deliver safe and effective services to the community while ensuring the safety of responders.

The roadmap was developed through extensive consultation with stakeholders and informed by operational needs across VICSES. Stakeholder feedback helped shape the roadmap's priorities, structure and practical actions, ensuring it reflects current requirements while supporting future capability development. The roadmap identifies 28 key operational needs, supported by 65 work packages to be delivered over five years. Together, these work packages outline the activities required to strengthen training and enhance operational capability over time. Designed as a practical planning and governance tool, the roadmap will guide decision-making, investment and continuous improvement.

The roadmap will improve how training is planned, delivered and supported across VICSES. It provides greater visibility of training demand and member readiness, enabling more effective prioritisation and coordinated scheduling across regions and units. It also strengthens support for trainers and assessors, promotes consistent standards for endorsement and assurance, and establishes a structured approach to translating training needs into measurable work packages that can be monitored, reviewed and refined over time.

EMV coordinated IMT courses

As at 30 June 2026, 14 VICSES members have completed EMV coordinated IMT courses, and 43 VICSES members have completed VICSES developed and delivered IMT courses. VICSES is near saturation point for courses offered through EMV with prerequisite and other unit level courses not currently being offered. EMV has undertaken work to see Incident Safety Officer, Community Liaison Officer and Executive Officer courses developed during the coming financial year.

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

- Incident Controller: 1 participant
- Operations Officer: 3 participants
- Intelligence Officer: 1 participant
- Media Officer: 4 participants
- Logistics Officer: 5 participants

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

- Finance Officer: 3 participants
- Resources Officer: 13 participants
- Situation and Analysis Officer: 11 participants

- Management Support Officer: 8 participants
- Logistics Support (Ground Support, Facilities and Catering Officer): 8 participants

VICSES has commenced identifying members to complete courses for the 2026-27 schedule developed by EMV. We will continue to liaise effectively with EMV and our partners to ensure IMT capability building opportunities are explored that support VICSES and the broader sector needs.

IMT Leadership Development Program

VICSES planned to host its sixth IMT Leadership Development Program in the fourth quarter. However, operational demand led to VICSES postponing the course. Consequently, VICSES will run two courses in 2026-27, now scheduled for August and October 2026.

This is an intensive five-day program to prepare participants for IMT leadership during major emergencies. The program is open to members from Ambulance Tasmania, Australian Capital Territory, EMV, CFA, FRV, Forest Fire Management Victoria, and SES members from NSW, South Australia, and Tasmania.

VICSES is the only agency hosting this specific type of training, that sees interstate partners joining the Class 1 Victorian emergency service organisations to improve their skills. This program is always a great success.

Proudly, the program aims for a minimum of 50% female participation, and the majority of facilitators, instructors, key speakers and support team will also be female.

Incident Management Capability Development Roadmap

As part of the Victorian Government's 2024-25 budget, VICSES received funding for four years to maintain and enhance its incident management capability.

To ensure that it utilises the funding effectively over the four-years and beyond, VICSES developed an Incident Management Capability Development Roadmap, with the Chief Officer Operations approving version one in February 2025. As part of the roadmap, VICSES has established the Incident Management Capability Development Steering Group to guide, endorse and monitor progress of the action plan.

The first two years of funding concluded as of 30 June 2026, a period in which VICSES focused on maintaining delivery of existing incident management capability programs, while completing roadmap actions. Examples of improvements to date include additional opportunities for volunteers to participate in incident management training, including several new programs targeting foundational IMT skills such as:

- Situation and analysis
- Finance
- Resources
- Logistics Support (including Ground Support, Catering and Facilities Officer)
- Management Support Officer

VICSES is developing and revising other courses due for release early in year three (2026-27) of this program, including refreshing and updating key courses at the foundational level targeted at volunteers.

Additionally, VICSES developed and released a new online package in November 2025, for Incident Control Point (ICP) awareness. As of 30 June 2026, 425 volunteer members have successfully

completed it. VICSES is also developing a Staging Area Operator course due for release in the new financial year.

During 2025-26, VICSES completed actions to develop internal targets for the capacity it needs for each of the accredited IMT functional roles and a pipeline model to ensure that it has a sustainable number of members progressing on a pathway to each functional role. These essential actions will enable VICSES to effectively evaluate its progress against the roadmap and ensure it is able to develop an evidence-based business case for sustaining this funding beyond the current funding period.

Level 3 IMT Accreditation Ceremony

The Level 3 Multi-Agency IMT Accreditation Panel met in August 2025, seeing one volunteer and two staff members achieving accreditation in three separate IMT functions. The panel also reaccredited seven members for a further five-year period, across five IMT functions.

This brings the total number of VICSES members accredited at Level 3 to 29, with four of those individuals also accredited in a second Level 3 role. A formal ceremony, led by EMV, was held in November 2025 to acknowledge and celebrate these achievements.

While VICSES continues to grow its IMT capability, a sector-wide shortage of Level 3 IMT personnel remains a challenge. The Incident Management Capability Development Roadmap is guiding VICSES' commitment to supporting its members in building and sustaining a strong and resilient incident management workforce.

Life Saving Victoria Ready to Lead Program

During 2025-26, 12 VICSES volunteers participated in the Ready to Lead Program, a cross-sector leadership initiative led by Life Saving Victoria (LSV) that develops women leaders across Victoria's emergency services. Representing units from across the state, participants joined peers from the Aquatic Industry, Ambulance Victoria, CFA, EMV, FRV, LSV and Parks Victoria to strengthen leadership capability, build professional networks and share experiences across agencies.

Across the 10-week program, participants developed practical leadership skills through a blend of in-person and virtual learning. Key focus areas included self-awareness, communication, personal branding, leadership presence, psychological safety, managing difficult conversations, mentoring, wellbeing and sustainable leadership.

Since VICSES joined the program in 2018, 78 volunteers have graduated from Ready to Lead. Many alumni have progressed into leadership positions, helping to strengthen a diverse, connected and capable volunteer leadership pipeline across the agency.

State Emergency Management Plan (SEMP)

EMV commenced a review of the SEMP in August 2025. During this time VICSES has raised and either partially or fully resolved approximately 50 issues relating to:

- Aligning VICSES' role statement to other Class 1 agency role statements including partially or fully removing any legacy statements from previous legislation.
- Clarifying the control arrangements and drafting an additional flow chart for concurrent, cascading and consequential Class 2 emergencies.
- The addition of tsunami and landslide to the Mitigation Table (Table 8) including advocating to ensure that role statement of mitigating agencies and organisations capture responsibilities for these emergencies.
- Advocating to resolve issues in relation to the Response Table (Table 9) and Lead Response Support Agency Table (Table 10) to clarify and resolve issues relating to terminology and

definition types of response and types of responses that have multiple agencies listed as control agencies.

Where any VICSES raised issues have not been fully resolved, commitment has been made to develop state arrangements post the publication of the SEMP review and will potentially be updated to the SEMP during the three-year review period.

The SEMP review is currently in the formal consultation phase, with a final position to be considered for approval in August 2026 and tabled at the SEMP Committee meeting in September 2026.

SEMP Landslide Sub-Plan

In 2025, EMV led a statewide risk assessment using the Victorian Emergency Risk Assessment process with input from VICSES and other agencies. The assessment identified landslides as a risk that requires Victoria to have a dedicated sub-plan. Following this, the Emergency Management Commissioner recommended that VICSES prepare a SEMP Sub-Plan on his behalf, to manage the residual risk.

Subsequently, VICSES prepared the first SEMP Landslide Sub-Plan for Victoria, with the State Crisis and Resilience Council approving it on 16 July 2026.

VICSES developed this plan in coordination with partner agencies and departments to ensure an integrated and coordinated approach to the state's management of landslide events. It aims to reduce the impact and consequences of these events on the community, infrastructure, and services, as well as economies and ecosystems.

The SEMP Landslide Sub-Plan also implements parts of recommendation 17 from the Board of Inquiry's report to the Governor of Victoria into the January 2025 McCrae landslide, by enabling enhanced landslide risk assessment and planning at regional and municipal levels.

Flood Risk Engagement Programs

After seeing an urgent need to support Melbourne Water's updates to their flood models, in September 2025 VICSES established the Metropolitan Flood Risk Engagement Program. Through the program, VICSES has been collaborating with Melbourne Water, and our cohorts of Operations Officers Emergency Management (OOEM) and Community Resilience Coordinators (CRCs) to incorporate updated modelling into emergency management plans and local flood guides. VICSES has also been supporting place-based community engagement, working with the community to help them understand their flood risk, and how to best prepare themselves and their properties. Further work will be undertaken to support exercising emergency management plans to understand and use the new flood models.

The VICSES Regional Flood Risk Engagement Program commenced in October 2025 as a result of successful funding under the Regional Flood Risk Reduction Grants program. The program comprises specialist Flood Intelligence Officers, supporting to translate technical flood risk information into emergency management planning and community engagement materials, ensuring greater access to information for emergency agencies and the community, to make informed decisions. The program will ensure close collaboration with regional service delivery teams to support flood and storm planning, Local Flood Guide development, exercising activities and community preparedness initiatives. This approach will strengthen local capability, improve coordination and support ongoing readiness across the state.

Overseas travel

Fire Department Instructors Conference International

In April 2026 four VICSES members attended the Fire Department Instructors Conference (FDIC International) in Indianapolis, Indiana, USA. FDIC International is the world's largest annual training event for firefighters and emergency services personnel, attracting more than 35,000 participants from

across the globe and providing access to leading industry training, operational innovations, and professional networking opportunities.

Members participated in a range of specialist training programs focused on vehicle and technical rescue, including advanced vehicle extrication, heavy vehicle rescue, machinery entrapment, and battery and electric vehicle extrication. These practical, hands-on sessions provided exposure to contemporary rescue techniques, equipment, and instructional practices used by emergency services agencies internationally.

The conference presented a valuable opportunity to showcase VICSES capabilities and expertise in vehicle rescue to a global audience. Through engagement with instructors, rescue specialists, and emergency responders from around the world, members were able to share operational experiences, discuss training methodologies, and establish professional relationships that will support future knowledge sharing and collaboration.

A key outcome from attendance was the confirmation that VICSES training standards, rescue methodologies, and equipment are comparable with, and in many cases exceed, those observed within leading international organisations. Members returned with increased confidence in the quality of VICSES capability while also identifying opportunities to further enhance training and operational practices.

Following the conference, members were invited to visit the Los Angeles Fire Department Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) training facility, where they observed specialist training infrastructure and exchanged operational knowledge with USAR personnel. This visit further strengthened international connections and provided additional insights into specialist rescue training and capability development.

Overall, attendance at FDIC International delivered significant professional development, strengthened VICSES' international profile, and reinforced the organisation's position as a leader in vehicle rescue capability and training.

INTERSCHUTZ Expo

As part of VICSES’ commitment to continuous improvement and innovation, Operational and Assets staff along with volunteer members, attended INTERSCHUTZ 2026 as part of a broader AFAC delegation representing Australian emergency services. The delegation comprised 30 professionals from nine partner agencies across five Australian states.

Held over six days in Hannover, Germany, INTERSCHUTZ is the world’s leading international trade fair and conference for firefighting, rescue services, civil protection, and safety and security. The event provided an opportunity for emergency service members across the globe to meet and share learnings and opportunities to enhance service delivery. The expo included vehicles, assets and equipment displays across the fire and rescue spectrum. It also involved practical rescue demonstrations that our volunteer road crash rescue operators were involved in. The expo included emergency management lectures and the opportunity to discuss doctrine with European providers.

Attendance at the conference enabled VICSES representatives to engage with international industry leaders and gain valuable insights into developments in rescue vehicles, specialist equipment, personal protective clothing and equipment (PPC&E), and operational practices. These learnings will help inform future fleet and capability planning, including the ongoing development of the Medium Rescue Truck program, and support the delivery of enhanced emergency response capabilities for VICSES and the Victorian community.

To ensure VICSES maximises the value of both of the above overseas opportunities, members who attended will be presenting on their learnings to VICSES rescue practitioners, at the VICSES Rescue Symposium on Saturday 15 August 2026.

Learning and Development

During 2025-26, training program review and development activities included:

- **Incident Air Monitoring:** Release of online training for unit members who operate EPA Incident Air Monitoring equipment.
- **FloodZoom:** Release of online training for members who are required to use FloodZoom as part of their role within VICSES and/or within an incident management team context.
- **Slingshot Safety and Operation:** Release of a face-to-face training program that covers the safe use and operation of slingshots during operations. This program builds upon and replaces, the previous online training program.
- **Unit Financial Management:** Update of training program to digitise course delivery and assessment workflow.
- **Risk Management Fundamentals:** Release of online training for staff on how to utilise the VICSES Risk Management Framework (RMF).
- **Hiring Manager:** Release of online training to support the Hiring Manager Guide developed by the People and Culture team.

Learning and Development Framework

VICSES undertook a significant internal consultation process about our learning and development approach, resulting in the development of a proposed VICSES Learning and Development Framework.

The process involved extensive stakeholder engagement across volunteers and staff, utilising both online and face-to-face sessions to discuss their experiences.

Desktop assessment of the data collected identified focus areas to be integrated into future delivery plans emerged covering:

- Building a positive learning culture which promotes safety, leadership development, inclusion and talent retention.
- Developing operational and professional capability through accessible training, structured development pathways and stronger trainer support.
- Strengthening governance, quality assurance and professional standards to support consistent, high-quality learning outcomes.
- Improving systems, reporting and capability assurance processes to enhance decision-making and reduce administrative burden.

By developing the proposed framework concurrent with consultation on an Operational Training Roadmap by the Operations Directorate, alignment was achieved to ensure the two important documents drive improvements using collaboration across directorates.

Unit Controller and Staff Induction

Welcoming and preparing new members or members stepping into leadership roles is an important first step to establishing a successful and long-term relationship with our people. Taking advantage of the opportunities provided by the introduction of SharePoint, the induction for both volunteer Unit Controllers and newly recruited staff was extensively improved. The revised approach involves supporting our members to understand their role and how it works within VICSES, through interactive tasks that reinforce where important information is stored on our Intranet. The self-paced process is further enhanced with manager or supervisor support at various stages of the induction.

Learning Outcomes

Throughout 2025-26, VICSES members engaged in a wide variety of online and face-to-face learning opportunities now available to VICSES members.

VICSES issued 44,748 skills/competencies for the successful completion of a training event, of which 6,323 align to a nationally accredited training outcome. The training programs with highest attendance during the financial year include:

Course	Attendance
Child Safety at VICSES	1084
Maintain Safety at Fire Support Operations	915
First Aid	909
VICSES Induction for Volunteer Members	862
Tree Hazard Awareness	842
Maintain Safety at Storm and Flood Operations	747
Emergency Vehicle Response Driving	718
Crew Member Supervised – Theory	713
Managing Traffic at an Emergency Scene or Operation – Theory	665
Pre Incident Awareness Training (PIAT)	627

Our Relationships

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

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

Government and Emergency Services

Emergency Management Victoria

There is a strong relationship between VICSES and EMV. EMV supports the Emergency Management Commissioner, who has overall responsibility for coordination before, during, and after major emergencies, including the management of consequences of an emergency. VICSES works closely with EMV and shares responsibility, along with a number of other agencies, on a range of emergency management functions and initiatives.

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

Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action

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

Transport Accident Commission (TAC)

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

Australian Red Cross

Collaboration between VICSES and the Australian Red Cross has seen community engagement programs including the use of the Red Cross RediPlan and Get Ready app. VICSES members have been able to use these tools to engage with various communities and work towards building capacity

of individuals and households. VICSES has also encouraged the use of the Australian Red Cross Children's activity book in engagement programs with children.

Local government

VICSES has continued to play a key role within Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committees (MEMPC) including the development and review of VICSES control hazard sub-plans. VICSES worked closely with EMV to develop additional guidance and templates for MEMPCs to support plan assurance processes. Additionally, VICSES collaborated extensively with the sector in the development of the inaugural SEMP Landslide Sub Plan. One consultation session included approximately 100 participants representing local councils and the Municipal Association of Victoria.

Corporate Partnerships

AAMI

AAMI has proudly supported VICSES since 2003, contributing more than $11 million to strengthen volunteer capability, community preparedness and engagement across Victoria. The 2025-26 financial year marked a significant period of renewal for this longstanding partnership, with VICSES and AAMI finalising a new agreement extending the relationship through to June 2028.

The renewed agreement reflects the continuing evolution of the partnership and retains AAMI as VICSES' Principal Community Partner. It focuses AAMI's support on initiatives that deliver tangible benefits for VICSES volunteers and Victorian communities, including community preparedness, operational capability, volunteer recruitment and major community event activities.

The agreement also modernises the way the partnership is recognised. AAMI branding will no longer appear on newly produced VICSES operational uniforms, bringing VICSES into line with most other emergency services and aligning with AAMI's sponsorship approach for the NSW and Queensland SES. AAMI will continue to be recognised through supported community programs and campaigns, equipment, events and volunteer initiatives.

Key partnership achievements during 2025-26 included:

- **Melbourne Royal Show recognition:** AAMI supported VICSES' award-winning activation at the 2025 Melbourne Royal Show, which received the Melbourne Royal Gold Ribbon for Community Connection. At the centre of the activation was the volunteer-designed and AAMI funded 'Do 1 Thing' initiative, which encouraged community members to commit to one achievable emergency preparedness action. Across the 11-day event 591 commitments were recorded – 77% of participants opted in to follow-up communication and 27.2% later reported completing their chosen action.

- **Measuring social impact:** VICSES introduced a new B4SI social impact reporting process, using the 'Do 1 Thing' program as a detailed partnership case study. This work strengthened the partnership's ability to demonstrate outcomes beyond attendance and reach, including behaviour change, organisational capacity and the contribution made towards more prepared and resilient communities.

- **Community preparedness and recruitment:** AAMI continued to support community preparedness campaigns, volunteer recruitment activities and face-to-face engagement at major metropolitan and regional events. This included support for the 'Be Storm Smart' preparedness campaign and the 'We're Stronger in Orange' recruitment campaign for regional/rural units as well as preparedness resources, and activities that enabled VICSES volunteers to have meaningful conversations with community members about emergency preparedness.

- **Wear Orange Wednesday:** AAMI continued to amplify SES' annual celebration of volunteers through campaign promotion, public visibility and community engagement, helping recognise the contribution SES volunteers across Australia.

Together, these achievements demonstrate a partnership that continues to adapt while remaining focused on shared outcomes: supporting volunteers, strengthening VICSES capability and helping Victorian communities become safer and more resilient.

Working on the Business

Corporate Planning: Grants, frameworks and planning

Volunteer Grant Programs

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

- **Volunteer Emergency Services Equipment Program (VESEP)**

  In 2025-26, the Victorian Government committed $5.09 million in VESEP grant funding to VICSES. These funds resulted in 81 unique projects across 58 units, which included facility upgrades and replacement of Twin Cab Utes, 4WD and Medium Rescue Trucks for VICSES units.

- **Volunteer Unit Assistance Fund Grants Scheme (UAF)**

  The UAF was established by VICSES to enable VICSES units to meet the cost of purchasing and maintaining equipment and facilities, providing training and resources, and to meet the administrative expenses of the units. The program, funded by public donations, resulted in eight projects in 2025-26 to purchase training courses, computers, tools, and other operational and IT equipment.

Enterprise Risk Framework

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

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

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

Business Continuity Planning

VICSES continues to assist its business units, regions and volunteer units to manage their Business Continuity Planning (BCP) with training and support, reporting back to the Risk Management Committee and the Risk and Audit Board sub-committee.

VICSES has commenced carrying out a project to refresh its BCP framework and training in line with the Ministerial Standing Directions and the ISO 22301:2020 standard.

VICSES continued its practice of testing and educating its staff members in business continuity activities during 2025-26. During the year a successful Crisis Management Team exercise and payroll BCP test were conducted.

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

Infrastructure and Property

VICSES operates from over 170 facilities throughout Victoria, including:

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

In 2025-26, VICSES commenced the implementation of the Preventative Maintenance Project. This project provides for the establishment of a consistent, risk-based approach to managing preventative maintenance across over 170 facilities statewide. The project involves identifying and documenting maintainable building assets, developing a centralised maintenance database, and preparing site-specific preventative maintenance plans to support proactive asset upkeep, operational reliability, and compliance. In addition, the project includes the development of maintenance service procurement strategies and contractor onboarding processes, providing VICSES with a structured framework to improve maintenance planning, enhance asset performance, reduce operational risk, and support informed facility management decisions across its diverse property portfolio.

The previously reported Facilities Repairs and Renewal Program, established to prioritise facility repairs and renewal works across the state, continued its implementation during this period. As of June 2026, renewal works have been completed across 27 units, with another 44 units in progress.

During 2025-26, 18 projects received funding through the VESEP Grants Program for minor facility works, supporting ongoing investment in safe, compliant, and fit-for-purpose facilities for volunteers. The grants fund projects that improve the safety, functionality, and compliance of VICSES unit facilities, with priority given to works that address essential building compliance and statutory requirements, improve accessibility and gender-equitable amenities, renew ageing building systems and infrastructure, and enhance the presentation and functionality of facilities.

February 2026 saw the official opening of a new unit at Dunkeld. The new VICSES Dunkeld Unit facility represents a significant investment in volunteer capability and regional resilience. Delivered internally by VICSES through a collaborative partnership, the purpose-built station was funded through a combination of the Emergency Services Volunteer Sustainability Grants Program, the VICSES Building Fund, VESEP, unit financial contributions, Victoria Police, and a generous bequest. The new facility enhances emergency response, supports volunteer wellbeing, and strengthens VICSES' capacity to serve the Dunkeld community into the future.

The continued delivery of the VICSES High Priority Infrastructure Program, in partnership with the Community Safety Building Authority and our volunteer units, delivered the following key infrastructure outcomes over the past year:

- Practical completion of Mallacoota stage one, with stage two construction of an additional vehicle shed forecast for completion in late 2026.
- Commencement of construction of Rochester and Heathcote Units to commence in July and August 2026 respectively.
- Commencement of design, procurement and planning for new unit builds at Devon Meadows (Clyde), Corio, Kalkallo (Craigieburn North), Wyndham Vale and Port Phillip. Completion of all these projects is anticipated to be late 2027.
- Construction is underway at Kilmore and Bannockburn Units with completion forecast in August and October 2026 respectively.
- Footscray Unit tender documentation submitted for stakeholder approval with project completion forecast for late 2027.

- Land identification and/or acquisition for proposed new facilities at Sunbury satellite and Whitehorse Units.

Assets

Fleet Delivery Program

VICSES continued to invest in fleet renewal and operational capability during 2025-26, delivering a range of vehicles and specialist assets to enhance emergency response capability across Victoria.

During the financial year, 32 twin-cab vehicles and one snowmobile were delivered. The snowmobile was funded through the 2025-26 VESEP. Of the 32 twin-cab vehicles delivered, 28 were funded through VESEP, comprising one vehicle from the 2022-23 VESEP (Maffra), seven vehicles from the 2023-24 VESEP, and 20 vehicles from the 2024-25 VESEP. The remaining four twin-cab vehicles comprised two insurance replacement vehicles and two unit-buyout vehicles.

The specialist fleet was further strengthened through the delivery of two HRTs, 12 MRTs and several specialist trailers, providing enhanced capability to support operational response requirements and community safety outcomes.

These investments contribute to a modern, reliable and fit-for-purpose fleet, ensuring volunteers have access to safe and capable assets to support throughout Victoria.

NextGen HRT

During 2025-26, VICSES successfully designed and manufactured the first NextGen HRT prototype. The prototype was showcased through a statewide roadshow, providing volunteers with the opportunity to evaluate the vehicle and provide valuable end-user feedback. Following the consultation process, all feedback received was reviewed and where possible incorporated into a number of design enhancements to better meet operational requirements. These improvements informed the development and manufacture of a second NextGen HRT prototype. The second prototype was exceptionally well received and proved to be a significant success. As a result, VICSES endorsed the final design as the standard NextGen HRT model. The approved design was subsequently used as the basis for the VICSES Rescue Vehicle Panel Tender, ensuring that volunteer feedback and operational needs were embedded into the procurement process.

NextGen MRT

During 2025-26, work also commenced on the development of the NextGen MRT through the establishment of a Capability Reference Group and Fleet Working Group. These groups provided a structured forum for stakeholder consultation and contributed to the definition of operational requirements, vehicle layout concepts, equipment stowage solutions, and key safety and usability considerations. Building on lessons learned from the NextGen HRT program, the outcomes of this work will inform the detailed design and prototyping phases, supporting the delivery of a safe, fit-for-purpose and volunteer-centred fleet capability that aligns with VICSES operational requirements and statewide fleet standardisation objectives.

VICSES Rescue Vehicle Build Panel

In July 2025, VICSES released a Request for Tender to identify suppliers with the capability to manufacture rescue vehicle bodies in accordance with detailed VICSES specifications, relevant Australian Standards and industry regulations. The procurement process aimed to establish a panel of suppliers to support the ongoing delivery of high-quality rescue vehicles across the organisation. Following a competitive evaluation process, the tender was finalised in December 2025, with four suppliers appointed to the contracted panel. These suppliers will support VICSES' future vehicle fleet replacement and growth programs, commencing with the production of the NextGen HRT fleet.

Twin-Cab Winch Standardisation

During the period, an internal assessment of winch systems fitted to the twin-cab fleet was completed, resulting in the adoption of the PDX MK4 9.5/12K Premium Electric Winch as the new fleet standard. The change addressed ongoing reliability and warranty support challenges, improved operational readiness and reduced maintenance requirements. Standardising winch equipment across the fleet will also streamline future vehicle builds, replacement programs and spare parts management.

Fleet maintenance and services performance

VICSES continued to support a high level of operational activity throughout the reporting period. Between July 2025 and June 2026, a total of 1,647 repair requests were recorded across our fleet, with 1,551 repairs completed, representing a strong completion rate despite sustained maintenance demand.

New repair requests exceeded completed repairs by 96 during the year, reflecting ongoing pressure on fleet maintenance resources and increased demand for asset support services. The most frequently reported defects related to cab chassis components, batteries, service bodies, tyres and light masts.

The focus remained on maintaining vehicle safety, reliability, availability and operational readiness, ensuring critical fleet assets continued to support service delivery requirements while effectively managing a significant maintenance workload.

Continuous improvement and innovation

QR code fault reporting

VICSES successfully developed and implemented a QR code-based fault reporting system for operational vehicles and equipment.

The initiative enables members to report faults directly from the field by scanning a QR code, improving the speed, accuracy and consistency of defect reporting. The new process reduces administrative burden, strengthens communication between members and maintenance teams, and allows defects to be triaged and resolved more efficiently. The system also provides improved data collection to support maintenance planning, asset lifecycle management and continuous fleet improvement.

Together, these initiatives demonstrate VICSES' ongoing commitment to maintaining a safe, compliant and reliable fleet that supports volunteers in delivering emergency services to Victorian communities.

VICSES Fleet Drive Day

In March 2026, VICSES hosted a three-day Fleet Drive Day in Creswick. The event brought together more than 50 participants, including VICSES volunteers and staff, as well as representatives from Victorian and interstate emergency service agencies through AFAC.

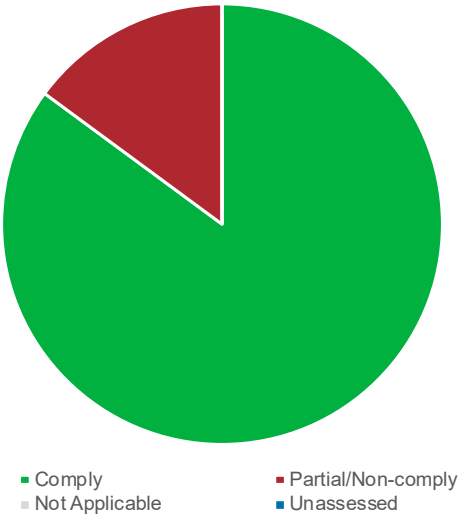
Participants had the opportunity to evaluate 14 twin-cab vehicles and three Light Rigid Trucks in operational driving conditions. The event was a significant success, providing valuable feedback on all vehicles assessed. The insights gathered will help inform future fleet commercial decisions and ensure VICSES continues to deliver safe, capable, and fit-for-purpose vehicles that meet operational requirements.

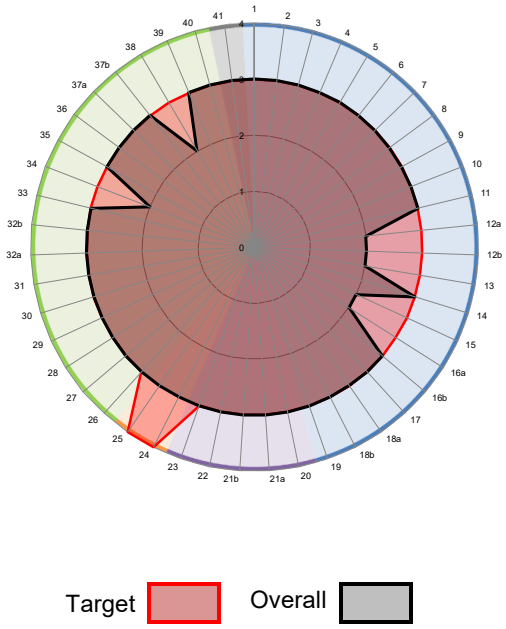
Asset Management Accountability Framework maturity assessment

The following summarises VICSES' self-assessment of maturity against the requirements of the Asset Management Accountability Framework (AMAF). The AMAF is a non-prescriptive, devolved accountability model of asset management that assesses compliance with 41 mandatory requirements. These requirements can be found on the Department of Finance website: www.dtf.vic.gov.au/asset-management-accountability-framework.

VICSES' overall target maturity rating is 'Competence', which is where asset management systems and processes are fully in place and systematically applied to meet the AMAF requirements. This includes a continuous improvement process to expand system performance above AMAF minimum requirements.

The 2025-26 VICSES AMAF compliance assessment has found that VICSES meets 35 of the 41 compliance requirements with partial compliance of six requirements. The key areas identified for improvement are in the management of monitoring asset performance, asset management system performance and information management.





Compliance	Maturity Rating	Descriptor
Partial/non-comply	Innocence (0)	Systems and process are not in place, limited awareness of the AMAF requirement.
	Awareness (1)	Systems and processes are being developed, effectiveness of application is not consistent, some knowledge of the AMAF mandatory requirement.
	Developing (2)	Systems and processes are being embedded, often applied effectively, with clear links to the AMAF mandatory requirement.
Comply	Competence (3)	Systems and processes fully in place, consistently applied and systematically meeting the AMAF requirement, includes a continuous improvement process to expand system performance above AMAF minimum requirements.
	Optimising (4)	Systems and processes are now leading practice, exceeding the AMAF mandatory requirement, and constantly being improved to align with support and drive organisations objectives.

Summary of assessment

- **Leadership and accountability (requirements 1-19):** VICSES has met its target maturity level for 15 out of the 19 requirements. The key identified areas for improvement are the monitoring of asset performance and the asset management system performance. VICSES will continue to develop initiatives to meet its target requirement of competency.

- **Planning (requirements 20-23):** VICSES are compliant and has met its target maturity goal in this lifecycle of asset management.
- **Acquisition (requirements 24-25):** VICSES are compliant and has met its target maturity goal in this lifecycle of asset management.
- **Operation (requirements 26-40):** VICSES are compliant in 13 out of 15 requirements. The key identified area for improvement is information management. VICSES has room to improve on the regularity of information review to meet its target maturity effectiveness of competency.
- **Disposal (requirement 41):** VICSES are compliant and has met its target maturity goal in this lifecycle of asset management.

Community and Communications

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

The team's ambitious vision is for every Victorian to understand the role of VICSES and be prepared for emergencies, ensuring our volunteers are widely celebrated, with unanimous community understanding of who we are and what we do. Ultimately, the work we deliver is to increase brand recognition, role awareness and preparedness action leading to increased trust, desired community actions, volunteerism, and funding opportunities for VICSES.

Campaigns, events and media coverage

Each year, VICSES delivers a range of campaigns, events and activities that raise awareness of our organisation, celebrate our volunteers and staff, and strengthen community engagement. Key campaigns, events and media highlights during 2025-26 included:

Women in Rescue (21 March 2026)

On Saturday March 21, 2026, VICSES held its annual Women in Rescue training program, bringing together more than 300 female and gender diverse volunteers across seven locations throughout Victoria.

The event attracted strong statewide and regional media coverage across Channel 7 News, with, print, radio and online outlets highlighting the importance of increasing diversity across emergency services. WIN News also covered the event across its regional locations. Regional media releases and female-led local volunteer case studies helped generate widespread coverage across communities where training activities were held.

Media coverage also showcased the first-time involvement of Victoria Police's Air Wing and Life Saving Victoria, demonstrating the collaborative approach to specialist rescue training and reinforcing opportunities for women to volunteer with VICSES.

Support for this event also included representation as part of the Women in Rescue working group, member communications, videography and photography, and the development of branded resources for attendees.

Driver Reviver (Easter and long weekends)

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

Ahead of the Easter long weekend, VICSES launched its annual Driver Reviver campaign on Tuesday 31 March to encourage motorists to take regular breaks and travel safely during one of Victoria's busiest holiday periods.

The statewide media launch showcased VICSES' road crash rescue capability through a live demonstration, while reinforcing key road safety messages alongside partner agencies. The launch also featured road crash survivor Brett Mitchell, who reunited with VICSES Lorne Unit volunteers, including Unit Controller Chris Jones, following his rescue from a serious motorcycle crash on the Great Ocean Road in April 2025.

Channel 7 News covered the story, with local radio, print and online coverage also highlighting the important role volunteers play in supporting road safety initiatives and responding to road crash rescues.

Wear Orange Wednesday (20 May 2026)

Each year we celebrate Wear Orange Wednesday (WOW Day), a national day of thanks to the thousands of SES volunteers across Australia. The Community and Communications team coordinate the roll-out of this annual campaign in Victoria, including campaign branding, assets for social media, print and promotional signage, and media.

This year WOW Day billboards and banner flags went up across 48 sites across the state, including at metropolitan and regional locations.

A statewide WOW Day media launch was held at URBNSURF Melbourne on 19 May, generating metropolitan television coverage on both Channel 9 and Channel 7 News. Momentum continued on WOW Day with Channel 10 News broadcasting live weather crosses from the VICSES Chelsea Unit, while additional coverage was secured across 7NEWS and WIN News Regional.

Radio coverage was equally strong, with interviews across 3AW featuring Chief Executive Officer Rob Purcell, while VICSES Malvern Unit volunteer Danielle Stephenson appeared on ABC Radio Melbourne's The Conversation Hour, highlighting the diverse roles VICSES volunteers perform in supporting their communities. These were complemented by regional interviews across Ballarat, Mildura, Portland and Wodonga, providing audiences with valuable insight into the experiences of local volunteers.

Regional media engagement remained a key focus, with eight region specific media releases and targeted volunteer case studies distributed across Victoria. This generated widespread coverage across regional television, newspapers and online publications, including a front-page feature in the Geelong Advertiser profiling a local VICSES volunteer. The campaign reinforced the contribution of VICSES volunteers during National Volunteer Week while encouraging new members to consider volunteering with the organisation.

State Controllers Seminar (20 June 2026)

The State Controllers Seminar is an annual leadership event held for VICSES Controllers and Deputy Controllers across the state, uniting volunteer leaders from our Eastern and Western Regions for a dedicated day of leadership, connection and shared learning. The event provides an opportunity to connect with peers, engage directly with VICSES leaders, and contribute to discussions on the key challenges and opportunities shaping leadership across the service.

This years’ agenda included presentations, workshops and discussions with volunteer leaders, staff and Executive members, expo stands showcasing key initiatives from across the organisation for volunteers to interact with, an open forum for question time and a special Excellence Awards and Seminar Dinner was hosted in the evening, presenting several prestigious awards to members in attendance.

The feedback from the seminar highlighted its success and importance as a key event on our VICSES calendar.

Media coverage for significant emergency events

Media coverage across emergency events

- **Wyndham Tornado (October 2025):** This severe weather event saw significant media interest across ABC Radio, online platforms and metropolitan television networks due to the scale of the damage. VICSES spokespersons participated in media interviews across radio throughout the response, highlighting the efforts of volunteers on the ground while reinforcing key preparedness messages for future severe weather events.
- **Wye River flash flooding (January 2026):** Throughout the response and recovery, VICSES spokespersons, including Lorne Unit Controller Chris Jones and Chief Officer Operations Alistair Drayton, completed national, state and local media interviews coordinated by the VICSES Media team. Coverage highlighted the complexity of the recovery operation while providing operational updates and reinforcing community safety messaging.

Media engagement 2025-26

	Radio mentions	Online/ print mentions	TV mentions	Total website visits (ses.vic.gov.au)	Facebook impressions	X impressions	Instagram impressions
Jul-25	1,150	1,165	2,595	33,465	1,614,064	93,854	50,935
Aug-25	494	389	1,305	36,720	2,409,581	62,602	69,504
Sep-25	106	376	119	50,188	5,270,915	47,838	1,658,611
Oct-25	270	954	184	55,143	2,493,461	42,226	880,541
Nov-25	74	268	95	38,364	1,111,262	24,566	74,942
Dec-25	65	431	54	34,475	1,712,328	34,615	66,441
Jan-26	247	942	213	141,236	4,634,196	45,534	204,965
Feb-26	115	497	295	212,733	4,082,249	49,049	837,350
Mar-26	142	348	69	214,433	1,614,001	33,144	106,375
Apr-26	66	328	23	112,184	771,304	18,405	43,436
May-26	68	380	46	39,945	1,856,271	13,578	126,520
Jun-26	98	314	42	50,991	733,499	28,423	38,227
Total 2025-26	**2,895**	**6,392**	**5,040**	**1,019,877**	**28,303,131**	**493,834**	**4,157,847**

Government advertising expenditure

There were no government advertising expenditures meeting the $100,000 threshold during 2025-26.

Publications and content

VICSES produces publications and other content throughout the year for internal and external audiences. These communications engage our members and key stakeholders, demonstrating who we are and what we do.

External publications are available on our website here: https://www.ses.vic.gov.au/about-us/publications

Some of the key publications and content created during 2025-26 includes:

- **Community Matters:** Each quarter, a 32-page magazine is produced featuring content written by members of VICSES. This publication is then shared on our public website, and social media, with physical copies delivered to all VICSES units and offices and other key stakeholders such as agency partners and local councils. During 2025-26 four editions of Community Matters were released, including a special edition on our significant response during the High Risk Weather Season.

- **VICSES Express:** The VICSES Express is an internal newsletter issued on the first and third Monday of every month. This newsletter consolidates all non-urgent emails from state and region, with the aim to provide a one-stop-shop and reduce the number of standalone emails received by members. This includes updates and general news from across the organisation, relevant to all members.

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

- **Videography:** During 2025-26 several video productions were delivered to demonstrate who we are, and what we do. This included the end of year (2025) media coverage showreel, Women in Rescue event, and animated videos for flood and storm. These high-quality videos are used across social media, our website, and internally.

Community engagement

VICSES' Strategic Plan identifies Outcome 2 as a commitment to strengthening our connection with communities and improving their preparedness for emergency weather events. This outcome reflects our broader organisational mission to partner with communities to build resilience and aligns with our shared Vision of *Safer Communities – Together.* We are able to achieve this goal through targeted preparedness initiatives, informed by evidence-based research, and supported by direct, meaningful engagement with communities across Victoria.

Our Community Engagement Facilitators (CEFs) continue to engage with communities across Victoria to build emergency preparedness and increase awareness of the action's individuals can take to stay safe during emergency situations. These interactions are captured through the community engagement activity reporting tool, with a total of 2,073 engagement activities recorded during this financial year.

Some great examples of these valuable community engagement activities and events throughout 2025-26 includes:

Henty Field Days

In July 2025, VICSES was proudly represented at the Henty Field Days – southern Australia's largest agricultural event. Partnering with NSW SES, VICSES collaborated across the three-day expo to strengthen cross-border relationships and build future opportunities for joint events and operations.

Under the shared theme 'Paddock to Preparedness', SES members from both states delivered interactive displays and hands-on activities designed to help rural communities plan proactively for emergencies. CEFs and CRCs held meaningful conversations with almost 160 community members, supporting them to build resilience through practical preparedness.

Midsumma Carnival

VICSES' involvement in this year's Midsumma Carnival highlighted the vital role community connection plays in preparing for high risk weather events. Through a combined activation with FRV, Life Saving Victoria and EMV, emergency services worked together in a welcoming and inclusive environment. Positioned within one of Victoria's largest and most vibrant community celebrations, the activation provided a unique opportunity to reach people who may not otherwise engage with emergency preparedness messaging. The focus of the activation was on practical readiness for severe and extreme weather events, including storms and floods. An interactive *'Do 1 Thing'* activity was also featured as part of the activation, encouraging attendees to take a simple, achievable step toward preparing their homes for high risk weather.

Melbourne Royal Show

VICSES has an annual exhibitor stand at the Melbourne Royal Show, providing an opportunity to connect with the community through interactive activities, displays and conversations about emergency preparedness, volunteering and the work of our volunteers. At this year's show, VICSES won the Gold Award for Community Connection, recognising our work in preparing Victorians for emergencies. Around 80 volunteers and staff encouraged show attendees to 'Do 1 Thing' to boost their readiness; from clearing gutters to making emergency plans. The Melbourne Royal Show is VICSES' largest community engagement activation of the year with over 400,000 visitors walking through the turnstiles at the Melbourne Showgrounds and 591 members of the Victorian community making formal commitments to take proactive steps to ensure their home and families are prepared for severe weather events.

Key community engagement initiatives aimed at strengthening preparedness in 2025-26 include:

SES for Schools program

The SES for Schools program was launched in June 2026 and aims to help children understand the risks of floods, storms and other natural hazards while building their resilience by teaching them how to stay safe before and during an emergency. As part of Victoria's Disaster Risk Reduction Education framework, the program helps children build the knowledge and skills needed to stay safe during emergencies. Developed by VICSES for educators, students, and families, the program provides engaging, curriculum-aligned resources from Preschool through Level 6. Through interactive lessons and activities, students learn about local hazards such as floods and storms, understand how to prepare for emergencies, and identify key actions to stay safe. SES for Schools offers ready-made, easy to use materials that support meaningful learning while reducing preparation time, and resources are available to download by the public from the VICSES website (www.ses.vic.gov.au).

Community Connection Day with Blue Light Victoria

Volunteers from the Geelong Unit participated in the CoRE (Connected, Resilient, Engaged) program, delivered in partnership with Blue Light Victoria. The eight-week program supports year 10 and 11 students who may be facing academic, social, or personal challenges, helping them reconnect with school, peers, and their community. Throughout the program, students worked alongside emergency services and youth organisations, aiming to build confidence, empathy, and learn practical life skills. Each session focused on practical activities, self-reflection, and respectful conversations, leading up to a Community Connection Day where students put their learning into action. Students had the chance to ask questions about each role, learning more about what emergency services do day-to-day. A fun interactive activity had students guessing which service each volunteer belonged to, which helped break the ice and sparked plenty of discussion.

Preparing students to 'Drop, Cover, and Hold On' for the Great ShakeOut

VICSES volunteers joined Keysborough Secondary College students and Geoscience Australia Chief Executive Officer Melissa Harris in October 2025 for a hands-on earthquake drill promoting 'Drop, Cover, and Hold On' ahead of the global Great ShakeOut. As Victoria's earthquake control agency, VICSES strengthened preparedness by drawing on lessons from the 2021 magnitude 5.9 Woods

Point earthquake, where only 3.1% of people took recommended safety actions. With Victoria experiencing frequent seismic activity and updated assessments showing increased risk in the high country, VICSES and Geoscience Australia continuously work together to build community readiness and help students know how to respond when an earthquake occurs. The event provided a tangible connection to earthquake science and preparedness, helping to generate community interest and media engagement.

CEF training on the rise

CEF training expanded significantly over the past year, with many courses delivered across Victoria resulting in 533 volunteers now endorsed to facilitate community engagement activities. This training has strengthened statewide resilience, with CEFs actively working within their units to deliver preparedness messaging and build capability across local communities. The continued growth of the CEF program reflects the dedication of our trainers and volunteers, who play a vital role in helping Victorians understand weather hazards and prepare for emergencies.

Local council boost multicultural engagement preparedness

In partnership with Melton City Council and Wyndham City Council in southwest Victoria, the *Are You Ready?* campaign launched on 1 October 2025, delivering 15 professionally produced emergency preparedness videos in 11 languages to help diverse communities understand who to call and what to expect in an emergency. The launch brought together VICSES, Ambulance Victoria, CFA, FRV and Triple Zero Victoria, with more than 200 attendees, and highlighted the community's linguistic diversity, where 46% of residents speak English as a second language. The VICSES Wyndham Unit played a key role, engaging the community effectively and delivering clear preparedness messages.

Information Systems

VICSES continues to provide reliable and protective technologies in partnership with our commercial and government suppliers.

Through these partnership arrangements VICSES has been successful in the continual improvement of the security of our information and its systems as well as ensuring reliable access for all our members across the state.

Infrastructure security

A major focus this year was to replace obsolete and implement enhanced security.

Notable activities included:

- Update of firewalls and core network appliances.
- Enhanced cyber security *Essential 8* controls including end point and authorised access enhancements made possible from support by our government agency partner Department Government Services Cyber Security team.

Volunteer and operational mobility

During the period, our volunteers and operational staff were provided updates to further enhance their ability to service the community, including the following:

- iPads for use within the volunteers' vehicles were updated.
- Mobile device incident software application updated to provide for both Apple and Android operating systems for our volunteers.
- Upgrade of equipment including provision of mobile network kits laptops within VICSES ICCs.

Also, in partnership with EMV's Technology and Data team, VICSES participated in a satellite technology pilot for operational vehicles and units.

Customer service

A personalised customer service is provided to our volunteers and staff. In the past year a total of 12,998 requests and enquiries were received, an increase of 1,460 from the previous year. The majority this increase is attributed to the number of increased staff joining and support for Windows 11 upgrade to all PCs.

Glossary

Assist agency	VICSES may be asked by a control agency to support the response to an emergency by providing essential services, personnel (volunteers or staff), or material that may contribute to the management of the emergency.
Board	Victoria State Emergency Service Authority Board
Control agency	A control agency is the primary agency responsible for responding to a specified type of emergency. VICSES is the control agency for flood, storm, tsunami, earthquake, and landslide emergencies.
Declared operations	Declared operations are significant events requiring the allocation of resources and personnel for sustained periods to support a response in either a control or support capacity. They are declared by the VICSES Chief Officer Operations or an authorised member.
DJCS	Department of Justice and Community Safety
EMV	Emergency Management Victoria
FOI	Freedom of Information
FRV	Fire Rescue Victoria

IMT	Incident Management Team
Incident	An incident is when a VICSES operational member or crew take an action in response to one or more RFAs (relating to an emergency at a unique location)
RFA	Request for assistance
TAC	Transport Accident Commission
VICSES	Victoria State Emergency Service

Financial Management Compliance Attestation Statement

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



Jasmine Doak VICSES Board Chair
Melbourne, September 2026

VICSES Financial Statements for the year ending 30 June 2026

How this report is structured

Victoria State Emergency Service Authority (The Authority) has presented its audited general-purpose financial statements for the financial year ended 30 June 2026 in the following structure, to provide users with the information about The Authority's stewardship of resources entrusted to it.

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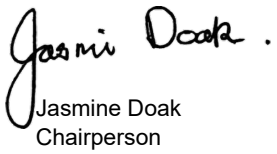
Declaration in the financial statements

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

We further state that, in our opinion, the information set out in the comprehensive operating statement, balance sheet, statement of changes in equity, cash flow statement and accompanying notes, presents fairly the financial transactions during the year ended 30 June 2026 and financial position of the Authority at 30 June 2026.

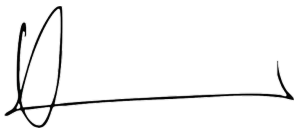
At the time of signing, we are not aware of any circumstance which would render any particulars included in the financial statements to be misleading or inaccurate.

We authorise the attached financial statements for issue on 22 September 2026.



Jasmine Doak
Chairperson
Victoria State Emergency Service Authority

Melbourne
22 September 2026



Robert Purcell
Chief Executive Officer
Victoria State Emergency Service Authority

Melbourne
22 September 2026



Qiuran (Judy) Morris
Chief Financial Officer
Victoria State Emergency Service Authority

Melbourne
22 September 2026

Independent Auditor's Report

Victorian Auditor-General's Office

To the Board of the Victoria State Emergency Service Authority

Opinion	I have audited the financial report of the Victoria State Emergency Service Authority (the Authority) which comprises the: • balance sheet as at 30 June 2026 • comprehensive operating statement for the year then ended • statement of changes in equity for the year then ended • cash flow statement for the year then ended • notes to the financial statements, including material accounting policy information • declaration by the Accountable Officer, Chief Financial Officer and Chairperson. In my opinion the financial report presents fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Authority as at 30 June 2026 and its financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with the financial reporting requirements of part 7 of the *Financial Management Act 1994* and Australian Accounting Standards- Simplified Disclosure.
Basis for opinion	I have conducted my audit in accordance with the *Audit Act 1994* which incorporates the Australian Auditing Standards. I further describe my responsibilities under that Act and those standards in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report* section of my report. My independence is established by the *Constitution Act 1975.* My staff and I are independent of the Authority in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (including Independence Standards)* (the Code) that are relevant to my audit of the financial report in Victoria. My staff and I have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code. I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.
The Board's responsibilities for the financial report	The Board of the Authority is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards- Simplified Disclosure and the *Financial Management Act 1994*, and for such internal control as the Board determines is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of a financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error. In preparing the financial report, the Board is responsible for assessing the Authority's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless it is inappropriate to do so.

Level 31 / 35 Collins Street, Melbourne Vic 3000
T 03 8601 7000 enquiries@audit.vic.gov.au www.audit.vic.gov.au

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial report

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

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

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

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



MELBOURNE
3 October 2026

Charlotte Jeffries
as delegate for the Auditor-General of Victoria

Comprehensive operating statement

For the financial year ended 30 June 2026 **($ thousand)**

	Notes	*2026*	*2025*
Continuing operations			
Revenue and income from transactions			
Grants	2.2.1	93,066	87,668
Other income	2.2.2	4,372	3,683
Total revenue and income from transactions		**97,438**	**91,351**
Expenses from transactions			
Employee benefit expenses	3.1.1	(51,100)	(45,490)
Depreciation	4.1.2	(17,134)	(14,067)
Interest expense	6.1.2	(922)	(831)
Other operating expenses	3.2	(42,208)	(35,919)
Total expenses from transactions		**(111,364)**	**(96,307)**
Net result from transactions (net operating balance)		**(13,926)**	**(4,956)**
Other economic flows included in net result			
Net gain/(loss) on non-financial assets [(a)]		820	1,304
Total other economic flows included in net result		**820**	**1,304**
Net result		**(13,106)**	**(3,652)**
Other economic flows – other comprehensive income:			
Items that will not be reclassified to net result			
Changes in physical asset revaluation surplus		-	-
Total other economic flows – other comprehensive income		**-**	**-**
Comprehensive result		**(13,106)**	**(3,652)**

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Notes:

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

Balance sheet

As at 30 June 2026 **($ thousand)**

	Notes	*2026*	*2025*
Assets			
Financial assets			
Cash and deposits	6.3	88,354	85,196
Receivables	5.1	9,794	11,423
Investments and other financial assets	4.2	14,393	11,623
Total financial assets		**112,541**	**108,242**
Non-financial assets			
Property, plant, and equipment	4.1	249,402	219,975
Other non-financial assets	5.3	22,740	32,578
Total non-financial assets		**272,142**	**252,553**
Total assets		**384,683**	**360,795**
Liabilities			
Payables	5.2	16,082	13,146
Deferred capital grant income	5.2.1	1,172	3,245
Borrowings	6.1	17,918	15,825
Employee related provision	3.1.2	11,032	9,280
Total liabilities		**46,204**	**41,496**
Net assets		**338,479**	**319,299**
Equity			
Accumulated surplus		89,505	102,508
Physical asset revaluation reserve surplus		21,317	21,420
Contributed capital		227,657	195,371
Net worth		**338,479**	**319,299**

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Cash flow statement

For the financial year ended 30 June 2026 **($ thousand)**

	Notes	2026	2025
Cash flows from operating activities			
Receipts			
Receipts from government		86,988	81,289
Receipts from other entities		5,815	6,879
Goods and Services Tax recovered from the ATO [(a)]		5,827	4,933
Interest received		2,759	2,751
Other receipts		7,108	7,337
Total receipts		**108,497**	**103,189**
Payments			
Payments to suppliers and employees		(102,002)	(86,524)
Interest and other costs of finance paid		(922)	(728)
Total payments		**(102,924)**	**(87,252)**
Net cash flow from / (used in) operating activities		**5,573**	**15,937**
Cash flows from investing activities			
Payments for investments		(14,393)	(11,623)
Proceeds from sale of investments		11,623	9,038
Purchases for non-financial assets		(11,897)	(14,686)
Proceeds from disposal of non-financial assets		923	1,304
Net cash flows from/(used in) investing activities		**(13,744)**	**(15,967)**
Cash flows from financing activities			
Owner contributions by State Government		15,554	5,587
Repayment of borrowings and principal portion of lease liabilities [(b)]		(4,225)	(3,142)
Net cash flows from/(used in) financing activities		**11,329**	**2,445**
Net increase / (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents		**3,158**	**2,415**
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the financial year		85,196	82,781
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the financial year	**6.3**	**88,354**	**85,196**

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Notes:

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

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

Statement of changes in equity

For the financial year ended 30 June 2026 **($ thousand)**

	Physical asset revaluation reserve surplus	*Accumulated surplus*	*Contributions by owner*	*Total*
Balance at 1 July 2024	**21,420**	**106,160**	**181,069**	**308,649**
Net result for the year	-	(3,652)	-	(3,652)
Capital appropriations	-	-	14,302	14,302
Balance at 30 June 2025	**21,420**	**102,508**	**195,371**	**319,299**
Net result for the year	-	(13,106)	-	(13,106)
Transfer to accumulated surplus	(103)	103	-	0
Capital appropriations	-	-	32,286	32,286
Balance at 30 June 2026	**21,317**	**89,505**	**227,657**	**338,479**

1 ABOUT THIS REPORT

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

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

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

Basis of preparation

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

The Authority is a Tier 2 entity in accordance with FRD 101. These financial statements are prepared in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards – Simplified Disclosures.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Consolidation of VICSES volunteer units

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

The volunteer unit financial transactions incorporated by VICSES include:

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

Transactions between the volunteer units and the Authority are eliminated.

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

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

Compliance information

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

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

2 FUNDING DELIVERY OF OUR SERVICES

Introduction

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

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

Material judgement: Grants revenue

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

Structure

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

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

($ thousand)

	Notes	*2026*	*2025*
Grants	2.2.1	93,066	87,668
Other income	2.2.2	4,372	3,683
Total revenue and income from transactions		**97,438**	**91,351**

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

2.2 Income from transactions

2.2.1 Grants

($ thousand)

	2026	*2025*
Department of Justice and Community Safety		
- Operating grant income	76,157	65,912
- Volunteer Emergency Service Equipment Program (VESEP)	2,328	3,053
- Valuing Volunteer Program (VVP)	280	280
- Other	1,007	188
- Disaster Ready	440	2,623
- Enterprise Agreement 2024-25	-	1,739
- EA IRV Funding FY25-26	439	-
- Mental Wellbeing Grant	-	133
- Major Incident Funding	151	1,857
- Fleet Rectification	5,015	5,015
- Special Appropriation Volunteer WorkCover	762	554
Other State Government Departments & Authorities		
- Melbourne Water	337	630
- Transport Accident Commission	5,815	5,550
Other grant income		
Other	335	134
Total grants	**93,066**	**87,668**

($ thousand)

	2026	*2025*
Income recognised under AASB 1058		
General purpose	90,403	84,481
Specific purpose grants to acquire non-financial assets	2,328	3,053
Other specific purpose grants	335	134
Total grants	**93,066**	**87,668**

Performance obligations and revenue recognition policies

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

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

Consideration received in advance of recognising the VESEP income is recorded as a deferred capital grant income (Note 5.2.1).

Grants recognised under AASB 1058

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

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

Related amounts may take the form of:

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

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

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

2.2.2 Other income

($ thousand)

	2026	*2025*
Sponsorship	500	500
Donations	320	64
Interest income	2,807	2,725
Other income	745	394
Total other income	**4,372**	**3,683**

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

Donations and other income included in the table above are recognised as revenue when the Authority obtains control of the transferred asset in accordance with AASB 1058.

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

3 THE COST OF DELIVERING SERVICES

Introduction

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

Structure

3.1 Expenses incurred in delivery of services
3.2 Other operating expenses

3.1 Expenses incurred in delivery of services

($ thousand)

	Notes	*2026*	*2025*
Employee benefit expenses	3.1.1	51,100	45,490
Other operating expenses	3.2	42,208	35,919
Total expenses incurred in delivery of services		**93,308**	**81,409**

3.1.1 Employee benefits in the comprehensive operating statement

($ thousand)

	Notes	*2026*	*2025*
Defined contribution superannuation expense		4,636	3,451
Defined benefit superannuation expense		36	34
Termination benefits		100	211
Salaries and wages, annual leave and long service leave		46,328	41,794
Total employee expenses		**51,100**	**45,490**

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

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

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

3.1.2 Employee related provision

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

($ thousand)

	Notes	2026	2025
Current provisions:			
Annual leave [(i)]			
Unconditional and expected to be settled within 12 months		3,608	3,054
Unconditional and expected to be settled after 12 months		235	195
Long service leave			
Unconditional and expected to be settled within 12 months		464	393
Unconditional and expected to be settled after 12 months		3,380	2,864
Provisions related to employee benefit on-costs			
Unconditional and expected to be settled within 12 months		1,376	1,222
Unconditional and expected to be settled after 12 months		843	739
Total current provisions for employee benefits		**9,906**	**8,467**
Non-current provisions			
Employee benefits [(ii)]		920	660
On-costs		206	153
Total non-current provisions for employee benefits		**1,126**	**813**
Total provisions for employee benefits		**11,032**	**9,280**

NOTES:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

3.1.3 Superannuation contributions

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

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

($ thousand)

	Paid contribution for the year		*Contribution outstanding at year end*	
	2026	*2025*	*2026*	*2025*
Defined benefit plans				
State Superannuation Fund - Revised and New [(a)]	36	34	-	-
Defined contribution plans				
VicSuper	1,412	1,192	-	-
Other	3,223	2,259	-	-
Total	**4,671**	**3,485**	**-**	**-**

Note:

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

3.2 Other operating expenses

($ thousand)

	Notes	2026	2025
Contractors and professional services		7,902	6,889
Building service and professional maintenance		5,083	2,350
Travel and associated costs		1,005	745
Printing, stationery and other office expenses		505	370
Postage and communication expenses		9,282	9,708
Vehicle expenses		4,107	3,900
Technology services costs		5,484	3,852
Protective clothing		2,317	1,532
Emergency rescue equipment		2,823	2,247
Training (Volunteers and Staff)		2,470	2,263
Other		1,029	1,289
Short term leases		271	329
Net result of VICSES volunteer units		(70)	445
Total other operating expenses		**42,208**	**35,919**

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

Other operating expenses are recognised as an expense in the reporting period in which they are incurred.

The following lease payments are recognised on a straight-line basis:
- Short-term leases – leases with a term 12 months or less
- Low value leases – leases with the underlying asset's fair value (when new, regardless of the age of the asset being leased) is no more than $10,000.

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

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

4 KEY ASSETS AVAILABLE TO SUPPORT OUTPUT DELIVERY

Introduction

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

Structure

4.1 Property, plant and equipment
4.2 Investments and other financial

4.1 Property, plant and equipment

($ thousand)

	Gross carrying amount		*Accumulated depreciation*		*Net carrying amount*	
	2026	*2025*	*2026*	*2025*	*2026*	*2025*
Crown land at fair value	38,427	34,093	-	-	38,427	34,093
Buildings and leasehold improvements at fair value	120,037	113,267	(20,089)	(15,707)	99,948	97,560
Buildings right-of-use asset at cost [(a)]	19,386	16,758	(7,743)	(5,285)	11,643	11,473
Plant, equipment & vehicles at fair value	90,624	84,271	(45,093)	(39,128)	45,531	45,143
Motor vehicles right-of-use asset at cost [(a)]	7,318	5,582	(2,817)	(2,874)	4,501	2,708
Assets under construction at cost	49,352	28,998	-	-	49,352	28,998
Net carrying amount	**325,144**	**282,969**	**(75,742)**	**(62,994)**	**249,402**	**219,975**

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

[(a)] As a result of a change in FRD 104 Leases effective for reporting periods from 30 June 2026, right-of-use assets are measured at cost for reporting period 2026. The comparative information for reporting period 2025 is not restated and is reported at the previously determined fair value. For further information, refer to Note 8.2.

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

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

($ thousand)

	Gross carrying amount		*Accumulated depreciation*		*Net carrying amount*	
	2026	*2025*	*2026*	*2025*	*2026*	*2025*
Buildings at cost	19,386	16,758	(7,743)	(5,285)	11,643	11,473
Plant, equipment and vehicles at cost	7,318	5,582	(2,817)	(2,874)	4,501	2,708
Net carrying amount	**26,704**	**22,340**	**(10,560)**	**(8,159)**	**16,144**	**14,181**

($ thousand)

	Buildings at cost	*Plant, equipment and vehicles at cost*	*Total*
Opening balance - 1 July 2025	**11,473**	**2,708**	**14,181**
Additions	2,321	4,507	6,828
Depreciation	(2,151)	(2,714)	(4,865)
Closing balance - 30 June 2026	**11,643**	**4,501**	**16,144**

As a result of a change in FRD 104 Leases effective for reporting periods from 30 June 2026, right-of-use assets are measured at cost for reporting period 2026. The comparative information for reporting period 2025 is not restated and is reported at the previously determined fair value. For further information, refer to Note 8.2.

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

The Authority recognises a right-of-use asset and a lease liability at the lease commencement date. The right-of-use asset is initially measured at cost which comprises the initial amount of the lease liability adjusted for:
- any lease payments made at or before the commencement date; plus
- any initial direct costs incurred
- an estimate of costs to dismantle and remove the underlying asset or to restore the underlying asset or the site on which it is located, less any lease incentive received.

Right-of-use asset – Subsequent measurement

Right-of-use assets are subsequently measured at cost less accumulated depreciation, impairment and any adjustments for remeasurement of the lease liability. The Authority depreciates the right-of-use assets on a straight-line basis from the lease commencement date to the earlier of the end of the useful life of the right-of-use asset or the end of the lease term. Impairment of right-of-use assets is determined and accounted for in accordance with AASB 136 Impairment of Assets.

Impairment of right-of-use assets

The Authority has assessed all right-of-use assets for impairment, and no indicators of impairment are identified as at 30 June 2026.

Impairment of property, plant and equipment

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

4.1.2 Depreciation and amortisation

($ thousand)

	2026	*2025*
Buildings and leasehold improvements	(6,534)	(5,464)
Plant, equipment and vehicles	(7,886)	(6,763)
Leased vehicles	(2,714)	(1,840)
Total depreciation and amortisation	**(17,134)**	**(14,067)**

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

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

(years)

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

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

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

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

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

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

($ thousand)

	Land		*Buildings and leasehold improvements*		*Plant, equipment & vehicles*		*Assets under construction*		*Total*	
	2026	*2025*	*2026*	*2025*	*2026*	*2025*	*2026*	*2025*	*2026*	*2025*
Opening balance 1 July	34,093	33,886	109,033	64,348	47,851	41,333	28,998	73,596	219,975	213,163
Additions	-	207	2,322	1,192	4,506	4,944	39,975	14,747	46,803	21,090
Disposals	-	-	-	-	(242)	(212)	-	-	(242)	(212)
Transfer in/out of assets under construction	4,334	-	6,770	48,934	8,517	10,412	(19,621)	(59,345)	-	1
Reclass	-	-	-	23	-	(23)	-	-	-	-
Depreciation			(6,534)	(5,464)	(10,600)	(8,603)	-	-	(17,134)	(14,067)
Closing balance	**38,427**	**34,093**	**111,591**	**109,033**	**50,032**	**47,851**	**49,352**	**28,998**	**249,402**	**219,975**

Note
Fair value assessments have been performed for all classes of assets excepting the right-of-use assets and the decision was made that movements were not material (less than or equal to 10 per cent) for a full revaluation as per the requirement of FRD 103. The next scheduled full revaluation for this purpose group will be conducted in 2027.Refer to note 7.3 for more information.
As a result of a change in FRD 104 Leases effective for reporting periods from 30 June 2026, right-of-use assets are measured at cost for reporting period 2026. The comparative information for reporting period 2025 is not restated and is reported at the previously determined fair value. For further information, refer to Note 8.2

4.2 Investments and other financial assets

($ thousand)

	2026	*2025*
Current investments and other financial assets [(a)]		
Term deposits [(b)]		
Australia dollar term deposits > 3 months	14,393	11,623
Total current investments and other financial assets	**14,393**	**11,623**
Non-current investments and other financial assets [(a)]		
Term deposits [(b)]		
Australia dollar term deposits > 12 months	-	-
Total non-current investments and other financial assets	-	-
Total investments and other financial assets	**14,393**	**11,623**

Notes:

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

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

5 OTHER ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

Introduction

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

Structure

5.1 Receivables
5.2 Payables
5.3 Other non-financial assets

5.1 Receivables

($ thousand)

	2026	*2025*
Contractual		
Grant receivables	9,009	9,881
Statutory		
GST input tax credit recoverable	649	1,119
Other receivables	136	423
Total receivables	**9,794**	**11,423**
Represented by		
Current receivables	9,794	11,423

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

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

5.2 Payables

($ thousand)

	2026	*2025*
Contractual		
Accounts payable	15,851	12,950
Statutory		
Other taxes payable	231	196
Total payables	**16,082**	**13,146**
Represented by		
Current payables	16,082	13,146

Payables consist of:

- **Contractual payables:** Classified as financial instruments and measured at amortised cost. Accounts payable represent liabilities for goods and services provided to the Authority prior to the end of the financial year that are unpaid

- **Statutory payables:** Recognised and measured similarly to contractual payables, but not classified as financial instruments and not included in the category of financial liabilities at amortised cost, because they do not arise from contracts.

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

5.2.1 Deferred capital grant income

($ thousand)

	2026	*2025*
Deferred capital grant income	1,172	3,245
Represented by:		
Current deferred capital grant income	1,172	3,245

Deferred capital grant income represents funding received in advance under the Volunteer Emergency Services Equipment Program (VESEP) for the acquisition or construction of recognised non-financial assets for Volunteer Units. Revenue is recognised in accordance with the Authority's accounting policy for grants under AASB 1058 when the relevant recognition criteria are met.

5.3 Other non-financial assets [(a)]

($ thousand)

	2026	*2025*
Current other assets		
Prepayments	375	1,270
Total current other assets	**375**	**1,270**
Non-Current other assets		
Prepayments	22,365	31,308
Total non-current other assets	**22,365**	**31,308**
Total other assets	**22,740**	**32,578**

Note:

(a) Balance at 30 June 2026 includes $22.147 million (30 June 2025: $31.234million) paid to the Community Safety Building Authority for the construction of new Volunteer Unit Headquarters.

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

6 HOW WE FINANCED OUR OPERATIONS

Introduction

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

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

Structure

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

6.1 Borrowings

($ thousand)

	2026	*2025*
Current borrowings		
Lease liabilities [(a)]	3,290	2,767
Total current borrowings	**3,290**	**2,767**
Non-current borrowings		
Lease liabilities [(a)]	14,628	13,058
Total non-current borrowings	**14,628**	**13,058**
Total borrowings	**17,918**	**15,825**

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

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

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

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

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

6.1.1 Maturity analysis of borrowings [(a)]

($ thousand)

				Maturity dates				
2026	*Weighted average interest rate (%)*	*Carrying amount*	*Nominal amount*	*Less than 1 month*	*1- 3 months*	*3 months to 1 year*	*1 to 5 years*	*5+ Years*
Lease liabilities	4.45%	17,918	22,298	361	685	2,878	9,696	8,678
Total		**17,918**	**22,298**	**361**	**685**	**2,878**	**9,696**	**8,678**
2025								
Lease liabilities	4.42%	15,825	20,148	301	570	2,454	7,451	9,372
Total		**15,825**	**20,148**	**301**	**570**	**2,454**	**7,451**	**9,372**

Note:

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

6.1.2 Interest Expense

($ thousand)

	2026	*2025*
Interest on leases	922	831
Total interest expense	**922**	**831**

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

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

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

6.2 Leases

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

The Authority's leasing activities

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

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

Leases at significantly below-market terms and conditions

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

6.2.1 Right-of-use Assets

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

6.2.2 Amounts recognised in the Comprehensive Operating Statement

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

($ thousand)

	2026	*2025*
Expenses relating to short term leases and leases for low-value assets	271	329
Total amount recognised in the statement of comprehensive statement	**271**	**329**

6.2.3 Recognition and measurement of leases as a lessee

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

- whether the contract contains an identified asset, which is either explicitly identified in the contract or implicitly specified by being identified at the time the asset is made available to the Authority and for which the supplier does not have substantive substitution rights

- whether the Authority has the right to obtain substantially all of the economic benefits from use of the identified asset throughout the period of use, considering its rights within the defined scope of the contract and the Authority has the right to direct the use of the identified asset throughout the period of use

- whether the Authority has the right to take decisions in respect of 'how and for what purpose' the asset is used throughout the period of use.

Separation of lease and non-lease components

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

Recognition and measurement of leases as a lessee

Lease Liability – initial measurement

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

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

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

Lease Liability – subsequent measurement

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

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

Short-term leases and leases of low-value assets

The Authority has elected to account for short-term leases and leases of low-value assets using the practical expedients presented in note 3.2 and 6.2.2. Instead of recognising a right-of-use asset and lease liability, the payments in relation to these are recognised as an expense in profit or loss on a straight-line basis over the lease term.

Presentation of right-of-use assets and lease liabilities

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

($ thousand)

	Minimum future lease payments [(a)]	
	2026	*2025*
Other lease liabilities payable		
Not longer than 1 year	3,924	3,325
Longer than 1 year but not longer than 5 years	9,696	7,451
Longer than 5 years	8,678	9,372
Minimum future lease payments		
Less: future finance charges	(4,380)	(4,323)
Present value of minimum lease payments	**17,918**	**15,825**

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

6.3 Cash flow information and balances

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

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

($ thousand)

	2026	*2025*
Total cash and deposits disclosed in the balance sheet held by the Authority	66,204	63,896
Total cash and deposits disclosed in the balance sheet held by volunteer units [(a)]	22,150	21,300
Balance as per cash flow statement	**88,354**	**85,196**

Note:

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

6.4 Commitments for expenditure

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

6.4.1 Total commitments payable

($ thousand)

Nominal amounts 2026	*Less than 1 year*	*1-5 years*	*5+ years*	*Total*
Capital expenditure commitments payable	4,636	12,727	-	17,363
Other commitments payable	6,408	2,229	-	8,637
Total other commitments	**11,044**	**14,956**	**-**	**26,000**
Less GST recoverable				(2,364)
Total commitments (exclusive of GST)				**23,636**

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

7 RISKS, CONTINGENCIES AND VALUATION JUDGEMENTS

Introduction

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

Structure

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

7.1 Financial instruments specific disclosures

Introduction

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

Categories of financial assets

Financial assets at amortised cost

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

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

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

The Authority recognises the following assets in this category:

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

Categories of financial liabilities

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

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

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

($ thousand)

2026	*Carrying amount*	*Total interest income/ (expense)*	*Impairment loss*
Financial assets at amortised cost			
Cash and deposits	88,354	2,807	-
Trade receivables [(a)]	9,009	-	-
Total financial assets at amortised cost	**97,363**	**2,807**	**-**
Financial liabilities at amortised cost			-
Trade payables [(a)]	15,851	-	-
Borrowings			
Lease liabilities	17,918	(922)	-
Total contractual financial liabilities	**33,769**	**(922)**	**-**

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

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

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

7.2 Contingent assets and contingent liabilities

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

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

Contingent assets

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

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

There were nil contingent assets of 30 June 2026 (2025: Nil).

Contingent liabilities

Contingent liabilities are:

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

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

There were no contingent liabilities as at 30 June 2026 (2025: Nil).

7.3 Fair value determination

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

Land, buildings, plant and equipment are carried at fair value, with the exception of right-of-use assets arising under AASB 16, which are measured using the cost model.

Fair value hierarchy

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

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

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

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

How this section is structured

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

- Valutation techniques
- Details of significant assumptions used in the fair value determination

7.3.1 Fair value determination: Non-financial physical assets

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

During the current financial year ending 30 June 2026, the Authority performed managerial revaluation of its non-financial physical assets. The assessment did not reveal any significant movement in the fair value of its non-financial physical assets requiring adjustments to the carrying value of these assets as at the end of the financial year.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

There were no changes in valuation techniques throughout the period to 30 June 2026.

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

Description of significant unobservable inputs to Level 3 valuations

2025 and 2026	*Valuation technique*	*Significant assumption*	*Range (weighted average)*
Specialised buildings	Current replacement cost	Direct cost per square metre	$153 - $5,785/m2 ($1,719)
		Useful life of specialised buildings	3 - 50 years (41 years)
Leasehold improvements	Current replacement cost	Cost per unit	$625 - $5,060,774 per unit ($88,473)
		Useful life of leasehold improvements	2 – 40 years (30 years)
Vehicles	Current replacement cost	Cost per unit	$216 - $286,060 per unit ($86,920)
		Useful life of vehicles	3 – 15 years (12 years)
Plant and equipment	Current replacement cost	Cost per unit	$1,084 - $100,918 per unit ($81,027)
		Useful life of plant and equipment	3 – 15 years (12 years)

Significant unobservable inputs have remained unchanged since June 2025.

8 Other Disclosures

Introduction

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

Structure

8.1 Ex gratia expenses
8.2 Changes in accounting policy
8.3 Responsible persons
8.4 Remuneration of executives
8.5 Related parties
8.6 Remuneration of auditors
8.7 Subsequent events

8.1 Ex gratia expenses

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

There were no ex gratia expenses for both individual items and in aggregate that are greater than or equal to $5,000 during the financial year ended 30 June 2026 (2025: Nil).

8.2 Changes in accounting policy

The Authority has made a change in accounting policy to change the measurement basis from the revaluation model to the cost model for the subsequent measurement of right-of-use assets arising from market leases, in accordance with the updated requirements under FRD 104.
Previously, the Authority had measured all right-of-use assets arising from market leases using the revaluation model under AASB 13. Following the change in accounting policy, the Authority will measure all right-of-use assets using the cost model. Right-of-use assets measured using the cost model are held at cost less accumulated depreciation and impairment and any adjustments for remeasurement of lease liability. Periodic revaluations are not required; however, the cost model requires annual impairment assessments in accordance with AASB 136.
Upon adoption of the cost model, the Authority has applied a modified retrospective approach. The approach takes the right-of-use asset's carrying amounts recorded under the revaluation model as at 30 June 2025 as the right-of-use asset's opening balances on application of the cost model.
Accordingly, the comparative information presented is not restated and is reported at the previously determined fair value.

Right-of-use assets arising from significantly below-market leases
The Authority is not required to make any adjustments to right-of-use assets arising from significantly below-market leases, including peppercorn leases, as the Authority already measures these right-of-use assets using the cost model in accordance with AASB 16 and FRD 104, and are thus not impacted as a result of this accounting policy change.

Impacts on financial statements
On transition to the cost model, there was no impact on the Authority's financial statements. No impairment was identified by the Authority for the right-of-use asset held as at 30 June 2026.

8.3 Responsible persons

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

Names

Minister for Emergency Services	
The Hon. Vicki Ward, MP	1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026
Acting Minister for Emergency Services	
The Hon. Enver Erdogan, MP	1 November 2025 to 4 November 2025
The Hon. Anthony Carbines, MP	3 April 2026 to 18 April 2026
The Hon. Anthony Carbines, MP	2 June 2026 to 7 June 2026
The Hon. Paul Hamer, MP	8 June 2026 to 8 June 2026
Accountable Officer	
Robert Purcell	1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026

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

Jasmine Doak	Chair	1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026
Casey Nunn	Board Member	1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026
Bernadette Northeast	Board Member	1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026
Jane Foley	Board Member	1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026
Noel Clement	Board Member	1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026
Shikha Gupta	Board Member	1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026
Gabrielle Castree	Board Member	1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026

Remuneration

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

($ thousand)

Remuneration band	*2026*	*2025*
$0 - $9,999	-	-
$10,000 - $19,999	-	1
$20,000 - $29,999	6	5
$40,000 - $49,999	1	-
$50,000 - $59,999	-	1
$120,000 - $129,999	-	2
$140,000 - $149,999	-	1
$490,000 - $499,999	1	-
Total number of responsible persons	**8**	**10**
Total remuneration	**667**	**597**

8.4 Remuneration of executives

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

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

($ thousand)

Remuneration of the senior executive service (including Key Management Personnel disclosed in Note 8.4)	*Total remuneration*	
	2026	*2025*
Total remuneration [(a)]	**2,903**	**2,318**
Total number of executives	**9**	**15**
Total annualised employee equivalents [(b)]	**9.0**	**8.4**

Notes:

(a) The total number of senior executive service members includes persons who meet the definition of Key Management Personnel (KMP) of the entity under AASB 124 Related Party Disclosures and are also reported within the related parties note disclosure (Note 8.5).
(b) Annualised employee equivalent is based on the time fraction worked over the reporting period.

8.5 Related parties

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mr Robert Purcell	Chief Executive Officer	1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026
Mr Alistair Drayton	Chief Officer Operations	1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026
Ms Kate White	Executive Director Community & Corporate Services	1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026

Remuneration of key management personnel

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

($ thousand)

Compensation of KMPs	*2026*	*2025*
Total [(a)]	**1,338**	**940**

Notes:

(a) Note that KMPs are also reported in the disclosure of remuneration of executive officers (Note 8.4).

Significant transactions with government-related entities

During the year, the Authority had the following government-related entity transactions (refer to Note 2 for more detail):
- $86.58 million received from Department of Justice and Community Safety (2025: $81.36m).
- $6.49 million received from the other state government-related entities (2025: $6.31m).

Transactions and balances with key management personnel and other related parties

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

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

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

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

8.6 Remuneration of auditors

($ thousand)

	2026	*2025*
Victorian Auditor-General's Office		
- Audit of the financial statements	116	114
Total remuneration of auditors	**116**	**114**

8.7 Subsequent events

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

- adjustments are made to amounts recognised in the financial statements where those events provide information about conditions that existed at the reporting date

- disclosure is made where the events relate to conditions that arose after the end of the reporting period that are considered to be of material interest.

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

Appendix 1: Relevant legislation, policies and disclosures

Freedom of Information

The *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (Vic) (the FOI Act) provides the public with a right of access to documents held by VICSES. The purpose of the FOI Act is to extend, as far as possible, the right of the community to access information held by government departments, local councils, Ministers, and other bodies subject to the FOI Act.

FOI statistics and timelines

During 2025-26, VICSES received 32 FOI requests. Of these, 15 were submitted by law firms, with the remaining requests received from VICSES members and members of the public.

VICSES finalised 30 FOI decisions in the 12 months ending 30 June 2026. All decisions except one were made within the statutory timeframes.

No FOI requests received during the 2025-26 financial year were the subject of a complaint or review by the Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner.

Making a request

You can request access to documents held by VICSES by writing to the FOI and Privacy Officer and including payment of the $34.50 application fee. This can be done by either:

- Emailing your request to foi@ses.vic.gov.au. We will then send you a payment form for payment of the required application fee;
- Telephoning the FOI and Privacy Officer on 9256 9000 to provide your credit card payment details over the telephone or leaving your details to receive a call back to take payment.
- Writing a letter, or downloading the application form and sending it, along with payment of the application fee, to:

  Freedom of Information and Privacy Officer

  Victoria State Emergency Service

  168 Sturt Street

  Southbank VIC 3006

Further information

Further information about the operation and scope of the FOI Act can be obtained from the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (Vic), the Professional Standards and Regulations made under the Act, and the Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner website at www.ovic.vic.gov.au.

Privacy

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

Surveillance

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

DataVic Access Policy

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

Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality

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

Public Interest Disclosure

The *Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012* encourages and assists people in making disclosures of improper conduct by public officers and public bodies. The Act provides protection to people who make disclosures in accordance with the Act and establishes a system for the matters disclosed to be investigated and rectifying action to be taken.

VICSES is committed to preventing, detecting and responding to instances of corrupt conduct.

VICSES will take all necessary steps to provide protection against discrimination or retaliation to any person reporting suspected corrupt conduct, as detailed as part of the VICSES' 1.19 Public Interest Disclosure Welfare Policy.

Reporting procedures

VICSES does not tolerate any corrupt conduct, and encourages the reporting of corrupt, dangerous, or improper conduct.

Disclosures of improper conduct by VICSES members or anyone undertaking business within VICSES should report it via:

- The Executive Director Community and Corporate Services directly, or indirectly via the appropriate line-manager; and
- A public interest disclosure welfare officer would be appointed, in accordance with the *Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012* and VICSES' 1.19 Public Interest Disclosure Welfare Policy.

Alternatively, disclosures may also be made directly to the Independent Broad-based Anti-Corruption Commission:

- Phone: 1300 735 135
- Website: www.ibac.vic.gov.au
- Email: *(see the website above for the secure email disclosure process, which also provides for anonymous disclosures)*

The VICSES 3.48 Corrupt Conduct Policy and associated directions, forms and guidelines, which outlines the system for reporting disclosures of improper conduct or detrimental action by VICSES or any of its members, is available via the VICSES intranet.

Disclosures under the *Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012*

	2025-26	2024-25
The number of disclosures made by an individual to VICSES and notified to the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission		
Assessable disclosures	1	0

Local Jobs First

The *Local Jobs First Act 2003* consolidates the Victorian Industry Participation Policy (VIPP) and Major Project Skills Guarantee (MPSG) policy which were previously administered separately, into the Local Jobs First Policy.

Under the Act, VICSES reports on standard projects which are projects with a budget of $1 million or more in regional Victoria, or $3 million or more in metropolitan Melbourne or state-wide. Strategic projects are those with a budget of $50 million or more, or any project declared strategic by the Minister under section 7A(2) of the Act.

The MPSG also applies to all construction projects valued at $20 million or more.

Projects commenced: Standard projects

During 2025-26 only one project met the Local Jobs First criteria. The Rescue Vehicle Build project involves four suppliers; total project value of $15,691,376.

The commitments made as part of the Local Jobs First policy for this project is as follows:

- An average of 82.6% of local content commitment.
- An average annualised employee equivalent (AEE) 36.3.
- A total of 90 Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to be engaged across this project.
- Across the four suppliers the average percentage of employment hours (retained and created) by location is:
    - Victoria statewide = 60.9%
    - Australia and New Zealand = 39.1%

Note: Industry Capability Network reporting contracts for this project were not in place for 2025-26. Only the above breakdown of higher-level figures from initial contract submissions are currently available for publication.

Standard projects completed

No standard projects were completed during this period.

Strategic projects commenced

No strategic projects were commenced during this period.

Strategic projects completed

No strategic projects were completed during this period.

Grants

VICSES did not provide any grants that met or exceeded the reporting threshold.

National Competition Policy and Competitive Neutrality

VICSES complies with the principles of the National Competition Policy outlined in the Intergovernmental Agreement on National Competition Policy.

VICSES has undertaken an assessment of its activities against the requirements of the Victorian Government's Competitive Neutrality Policy (2012). VICSES operates as a statutory emergency management agency whose primary functions are the delivery of emergency response, community resilience and related public services. VICSES does not undertake commercial activities in competition with the private sector. Therefore, no competitive neutrality measures were required to be implemented during the reporting period.

VICSES continues to monitor relevant requirements and complies with the Victorian Government's Competitive Neutrality Policy and any associated guidance and reforms.

Compliance with the Carers Recognition Act 2012

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

Project Development and Construction Management Act 1994

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

Building Act 1993

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

Declaration of pecuniary interests and shares

All Board directors are independent of VICSES. Board directors and all relevant officers are required to disclose any conflicts or pecuniary interests, and any shares held by a senior officer, whether as a nominee or beneficial owner, in a statutory authority or its subsidiary. They are also required to submit an annual Declaration of Private Interests in relation to their responsibilities to the Victoria State Emergency Service Authority.

Both of the following were completed in November 2025:

- A statement that declares that the declaration of pecuniary interests has been duly completed by all relevant officers.
- Details of shares held by a senior officer as nominee or held beneficially in a statutory authority or subsidiary.

Disclosure of major committees

There are no major committees sponsored by VICSES for disclosure during 2025-26.

Disclosure of Major Contracts

Departments and public sector bodies are required to disclose, in accordance with the requirements of government policy and accompanying guidelines, all contracts greater than $10 million in value entered into during the financial year.

There were no contracts greater than $10 million in value for the 2025-26 financial year.

Disclosure of major external reviews

There were no major external reviews carried out by VICSES during 2025-26.

Disclosure of major research and development activities

There were no major research or development activities carried out by VICSES during 2025-26.

Additional information available on request

In compliance with the requirements of the Standing Directions 2018 under the Financial Management Act 1994, details in respect of the items required to be retained and made available on request by VICSES under the Financial Reporting Direction 22 (FRD 22) Standard disclosures in the Report of Operations, which are outlined throughout this report, have been retained by VICSES and are available on request, subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 1982.

The information is available on request from:

VICSES FOI and Privacy Officer

Email: foi@ses.vic.gov.au

Reporting of environmental data

VICSES is committed to reducing its environmental impact to support the Victorian Government's sustainability objectives. As a state-wide emergency service organisation, VICSES recognises its responsibility to manage environmental impacts associated with its operations while continuing to provide critical emergency response, preparedness and community resilience services to Victorians.

Basis for preparation

2025-26 represents the first year VICSES has disclosed environmental reporting under the Victorian Government's Department of Treasury and Finance Financial Reporting Direction 24 (FRD 24). The purpose of FRD 24 is to provide transparency on public sector performance on environmental indicators within organisations year-on-year. These disclosures help to identify and manage government exposure to climate-related risks and promote continuous improvement in environmental reporting by government.

Considering this is VICSES' first year for reporting under the FRD 24, no comparative information has been disclosed.

The following disclosure has been prepared using information available through existing corporate systems and records, including financial data, fleet management systems, fuel card records, utility information, asset management records and other available operational information.

Organisational boundary

For the purposes of FRD 24 reporting, VICSES' operational footprint should comprise of 154 volunteer units, 17 staff offices including two co-located sites that operate as both an office and a unit, supporting the delivery of emergency management services across Victoria. However, for this first year 2025-26 reporting, VICSES' organisational boundary is limited to corporate locations only where related data is available (e.g. excluding fugitive emissions, as detailed below).

VICSES' environmental footprint is primarily associated with the operation of facilities, emergency response activities, fleet vehicles, operational equipment and supporting infrastructure required to deliver services across Victoria. Given the geographically dispersed and volunteer-based nature of the organisation, environmental reporting will continue to evolve as data collection processes and systems mature.

Data availability and exclusions

VICSES operates a large and decentralised network of facilities and volunteer units across Victoria. Environmental information is currently more readily available for corporate operations than volunteer operations due to limited availability of activity data.

Environmental reporting disclosures for 2025-26 are based on available corporate operational data only. While VICSES' operational footprint comprises approximately 171 sites across Victoria, the current reporting boundary is limited to 17 corporate offices for which environmental activity data is centrally available. Due to the decentralised nature of volunteer operations and current limitations in the availability of utility, fuel and other environmental activity data, volunteer unit information has not

been included in the reporting of environmental performance measures for 2025-26. VICSES has also not disclosed fugitive emissions for 2025-26 due to limitations in the availability and quality of data relating to refrigerants and other fugitive emissions sources. VICSES is undertaking activities to improve data collection and reporting capability to support broader organisational coverage in future years.

VICSES acknowledges that environmental reporting capability will continue to mature over future reporting periods. Planned improvements include strengthening environmental data collection processes, improving centralisation of utility and fuel information, enhancing asset-level reporting, and establishing clearer governance and ownership arrangements to support more complete and reliable environmental reporting across both corporate and volunteer operations.

Sustainable procurement

VICSES' approach to procurement and social procurement is outlined in detail within the Procurement section in this Annual Report (see page 24). Through its procurement activities, VICSES seeks to deliver value for money while supporting broader Victorian Government procurement objectives. This includes consideration of social procurement outcomes through established procurement policies, procedures and governance arrangements.

Environmental factors may be considered where relevant to the nature and scale of individual procurement, particularly for facilities, infrastructure and asset-related projects. As VICSES' environmental reporting capability continues to mature, opportunities will be explored to further integrate environmental sustainability considerations into procurement processes and decision-making.

Sustainable buildings and infrastructure

VICSES incorporates environmentally sustainable design considerations into the planning, design and delivery of capital works projects. New and upgraded facilities are delivered in accordance with applicable DJCS environmental sustainability requirements, which include consideration of sustainable materials, energy efficiency, resource efficiency and whole-of-life asset performance. During the reporting period, environmentally sustainable design considerations were incorporated into relevant capital works projects, including facility upgrades and capital works projects undertaken during the reporting period.

VICSES did not enter into any material new lease arrangements during the reporting period and preference for higher-rated office buildings and Green Lease Schedules is not currently a formal requirement within leasing decisions.

No newly completed or occupied office buildings with NABERS Energy ratings were identified during the reporting period.

While environmental sustainability initiatives were incorporated into capital works projects, no formal environmental performance ratings or certification assessments were completed or available for reporting for newly completed non-office buildings or infrastructure projects during 2025-26.

Greenhouse gas emissions

Greenhouse gas emissions reported by VICSES have been calculated using the Australian National Greenhouse Accounts Factors (NGAF) 2025. Scope 1 emissions have been calculated using NGAF 2025 emissions factors and the IPCC Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) Global Warming Potentials. Scope 2 emissions have been calculated using NGAF 2025 electricity emissions factors.

Indicator	Unit	2025-26
G1: Total scope 1 (direct) greenhouse gas emissions	Tonnes CO2-e	665
▪ Carbon Dioxide	Tonnes CO2-e	661

▪ Methane	Tonnes CO2-e	0.3
▪ Nitrous Oxide	Tonnes CO2-e	4
G2: Total scope 2 (indirect electricity) greenhouse gas emissions	Tonnes CO2-e	578

Electricity production and consumption

VICSES maintains emergency back-up generators at selected facilities to support operational continuity during power outages and emergency events. These generators represent VICSES' only source of onsite electricity generation and are used infrequently, primarily for testing, maintenance activities and emergency response situations. Electricity generated by these assets is expected to be limited, given their infrequent use for testing, maintenance and emergency response situations, and is not expected to materially affect VICSES' overall electricity consumption. Consistent with this assessment, no electricity generation has been reported under EL2 (total electricity generated from onsite renewable and non-renewable sources) or EL3 (electricity generated from onsite renewable sources) for 2025-26.

Information relating to electricity generated by emergency generators is not currently captured in a manner that supports reliable reporting. Given the infrequent use of these assets and the immaterial nature of the associated generation, VICSES has not separately disclosed quantitative information for EL2 or EL3 during the reporting period.

Indicator	Unit	2025-26
EL1: Total electricity consumption by source	MWh	741
▪ Purchased electricity	MWh	741

Fuel usage

Stationary fuel consumption relates to natural gas used at selected corporate facilities and diesel used in emergency back-up generators. These fuel sources support building operations and operational resilience across VICSES' corporate facilities. Emergency generators are maintained at selected locations and are generally used infrequently for testing, maintenance activities and emergency response situations.

Fuel consumption and associated greenhouse gas emissions have been calculated using available consumption data from natural gas invoices and generator fuel records.

Indicator	Unit	2025-26
F1: Total fuels used in buildings and machinery by fuel type:	MJ	924,261
▪ Diesel	MJ	706,065
▪ Natural gas	MJ	141,300
▪ Petrol	MJ	76,897
F2: Greenhouse gas emissions from stationary fuel:	Tonnes CO2-e	62

▪ Natural gas	Tonnes CO2-e	7
▪ Diesel	Tonnes CO2-e	50
▪ Petrol	Tonnes CO2-e	5

Transportation

Transportation energy use and greenhouse gas emissions are primarily associated with vehicles used to support emergency response, operational readiness and corporate activities across Victoria. The vehicle fleet comprises a mix of heavy commercial, light commercial and passenger assets operating across a geographically dispersed network.

Transportation indicators have been prepared using available fleet and fuel consumption information. Vehicle numbers are reported by vehicle category and fuel type, while energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions reflect fuel used by the vehicle fleet during the reporting period.

The transportation disclosures reflect vehicles and associated fuel consumption captured within VICSES' available corporate operational data for 2025-26. Volunteer unit fleet information has not been included due to current data availability limitations.

Vehicle category	Fuel type	Total energy used in transportation (MJ) [T1]	Greenhouse gas emissions from vehicle fleet (Tonnes CO2-e) [T3]
Heavy commercial	Diesel	1,268,680	89
	Petrol	4,994	0.3
	Total	1,273,675	90
Light commercial	Diesel	4,243,113	299
	Petrol	4,744	0.3
	Total	4,247,857	299
Passenger	Diesel	1,602,602	113
	Petrol	1,504,942	102
	Total	3,107,544	215
Total	N/A	8,629,076	603

** 'Other' includes vehicle records assigned to an undefined fuel classification ("Oil") within the source data*

T2: Number and proportion of vehicles by engine/fuel type and vehicle category

Vehicle category/ fuel type	Diesel	Petrol	Natural gas	Total number of vehicles	Proportion (%)
Heavy commercial	187	N/A	N/A	187	42%
Light commercial	83	N/A	N/A	83	19%

Passenger	47	34	N/A	81	18%
Marine	N/A	86	N/A	86	19%
*Other	N/A	2	8	10	2%
Total by Fuel Type	317	122	8	447	100%
Proportion (%) by Fuel Type	71%	27%	2%	100%	N/A

Energy usage

Energy consumption is associated with the operation of VICSES facilities, fleet vehicles and operational activities. Energy data has been prepared using available corporate operational information and reflects the current reporting boundary described in the ‘Basis of Preparation and Data Availability’ sections above.

No renewable energy sources were identified within the 2025-26 reporting boundary. Accordingly, VICSES' reported energy consumption comprises energy derived from non-renewable sources, including purchased electricity, transport fuels and stationary fuel consumption. VICSES will continue to explore opportunities to improve environmental performance and support future sustainability initiatives as reporting capability matures.

Indicator	Unit	2025-26
E1: Total energy used from fuels	MJ	1,152,861
• Petrol	MJ	121,186
• Diesel	MJ	890,375
• Natural Gas	MJ	141,300
E2: Total energy used from electricity	MJ	2,669,238
• Grid electricity	MJ	2,669,238
E3: Total energy used segmented into renewable and non-renewable sources:	MJ	3,822,099
• Renewable	MJ	N/A
• Non-renewable	MJ	3,822,099
E4: Units of energy used normalised by FTE	MJ / FTE	12,329
• FTE	FTE	310
• Total energy usage	MJ	3,822,099

Appendix 2: Disclosure index and legislation

Legislation	Requirement	Page Reference	Location
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Report of Operations			
Charter and purpose			
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SD 5.2.1(a)	Compliance with Standing Directions	81	1. About this report
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FRD 13	Disclosure of Parliamentary Appropriations	90	2. Funding delivery our services
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