

Operational Capability Strategy 2017–2022

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Purpose statement

The purpose of the Operational Capability Strategy is to explain our philosophy and the underpinning principles for the development and maintenance of operational capability.

The strategy outlines a holistic approach to operational service delivery that is centred on our people – volunteer (members) and staff – and the provision of knowledge, skills and resources to enable VICSES to deliver our services safely and effectively.

The strategy is designed to complement other key organisational strategies which aim to ensure our service delivery is risk-based and facilitates the most effective contribution by our people.



Message from the Chief Executive Officer



The Victoria State Emergency Service (VICSES) has served Victorians with distinction since 1975. We continue to evolve to meet the changing needs of communities and the emergency management sector.

VICSES is committed to achieving better outcomes for communities before, during and after emergencies.

We will do this by:

- Investing in our people
- Building a sustainable organisation
- Empowering the community

We will apply the following principles:

- Following the emergency management approach of 'all communities, all emergencies'
- Applying the ethos of 'we work as one' with other emergency service agencies
- Helping communities prepare before, act during and recover after emergencies
- Maintaining a partnership approach to individuals, businesses, communities and organisations.

To work effectively as one with other agencies we are compelled to consider how we build our capability to meet community needs. We also need to evaluate how we invest in resources across communities, agencies and organisations.

This Operational Capability Strategy (the strategy) addresses these important concerns.

The strategy was developed through extensive consultation with our people. This included distribution of a discussion paper, a state-wide engagement program, and feedback on the draft strategy from a diverse consultative group made up of members and staff. The strategy reflects our existing operational capability and provides a pathway for developing and applying our operational capability into the future.

The essence of our capability lies with the people who make up VICSES. We all have a stake in VICSES success. We can be proud of our collective contribution to serving Victorian communities. Let's embrace the opportunity to continue to develop.

I would like to thank everyone who contributed to the strategy. It is an important component in building VICSES as a sustainable emergency management organisation for the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Griffin', written in a cursive style.

Stephen Griffin
Chief Executive Officer

Introduction

As a 5,000 strong volunteer-based organisation, VICSES is committed to working with every Victorian to achieve its corporate vision:

Safer Communities – Together

VICSES is the lead agency, and has a legislated responsibility for the hazards of flood, storm, tsunami, earthquake and landslide emergencies. We are the largest provider of road crash rescue services in Victoria. We also provide a support role (for example search and rescue) to other emergency service agencies including Victoria Police.

At a minimum, VICSES requires the core capability to deliver services related to our legislated hazards.

Our people are professional, highly trained and dedicated to their mission of making their local communities safer. Prepared communities recover quicker from emergency events. Our people work within the community to educate and inform as well as to respond, improving the ability of the community to cope with each of the stages of an emergency event. Our people work on the front lines, in the control centres, in rural and metropolitan locations, always ready to respond to community needs.

This strategy aligns with the VICSES Service Delivery Strategy 2025 and the VICSES Community Resilience Strategy 2016-2019.

Consultation

Consultation was open to all our people and external stakeholders, and these valuable contributions informed the development of this strategy. Their input has identified a number of considerations that should influence our capability.



Background

Traditionally, operations in VICSES and emergency services focussed on the response phase, such as rescue personnel attending incidents, and the structure, command and control arrangements supporting that response.

A contemporary approach to operations across the sector recognises the broader elements of our service delivery. We describe these elements or phases as 'before, during and after', or 'prevention, preparedness, response and recovery'.

The sector and our service continues to challenge and evolve the thinking around what we mean by operations in our service to communities. VICSES has adopted a more holistic view of operations, and a definition that better reflects a modern emergency management organisation.

We have two elements to our service delivery. Firstly, connecting with community by building community resilience and responding to incidents (community facing); and secondly, enabling the successful delivery of these services by providing support with finance, training, equipment, assets and infrastructure, and other administrative and enabling functions (internal facing). Each element is equally important in achieving our vision of *Safer Communities - Together*.

Members and staff can refer to the Service Delivery Strategy and Community Resilience Strategy for further detail about the role of service delivery and resilience in our operational capability.

Definitions

The strategy requires agreed definitions and understanding of key elements.

Operational

For the purpose of the strategy the term operational (or operations) refers to the full scope of activities from community resilience building to incident response elements of our service delivery, including recovery after an emergency event. This is the activity that involves directly engaging the community before, during and after an emergency, and includes associated command and control (such as Incident Management Team [IMT]) roles.

Capability

The Victorian Emergency Management Capability Blueprint 2015–2025 defines capability as:

"Our collective ability to reduce the likelihood and consequences of an emergency before, during and after."

Capacity

The Victorian Emergency Management Capability Blueprint 2015–2025 defines capacity as:

"The extent to which the core elements of capability can be sustained before, during and after an emergency."

Interoperability/Interoperable

Interoperability is about maximising the ability of the emergency management sector to work together through aligned doctrine, data, equipment and training to strengthen the capacity of communities to plan for, withstand, respond to and recover from emergencies.

Agile - able to think, understand and move quickly and easily

Sustainable - able to be upheld or maintained at a certain rate or level

Effective - successfully produces a desired or intended result

Members

Includes registered and probationary volunteers of the Service as prescribed in S28 of the *Victoria State Emergency Service Act (2005)*.

Staff

Employees of the Service as prescribed by S30 of the *Victoria State Emergency Service Act (2005)*."

Quotes from our people

Throughout this document you will see blocks of text which look similar to this.

“We should take pride in building the capacity of our communities to respond themselves to an emergency, we should take pride in building their resilience and that your community is safer. Again, this is something we should promote more”

These quotes were made by our people who took part in the consultation process for the Operational Capability Strategy Discussion Paper.



Strategy on a page

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.

VICSES operates under the *Victoria State Emergency Service Act (2005)* and State arrangements as provided by the coordinating agency for emergency management - Emergency Management Victoria (EMV), providing emergency assistance to thousands of Victorians every year.

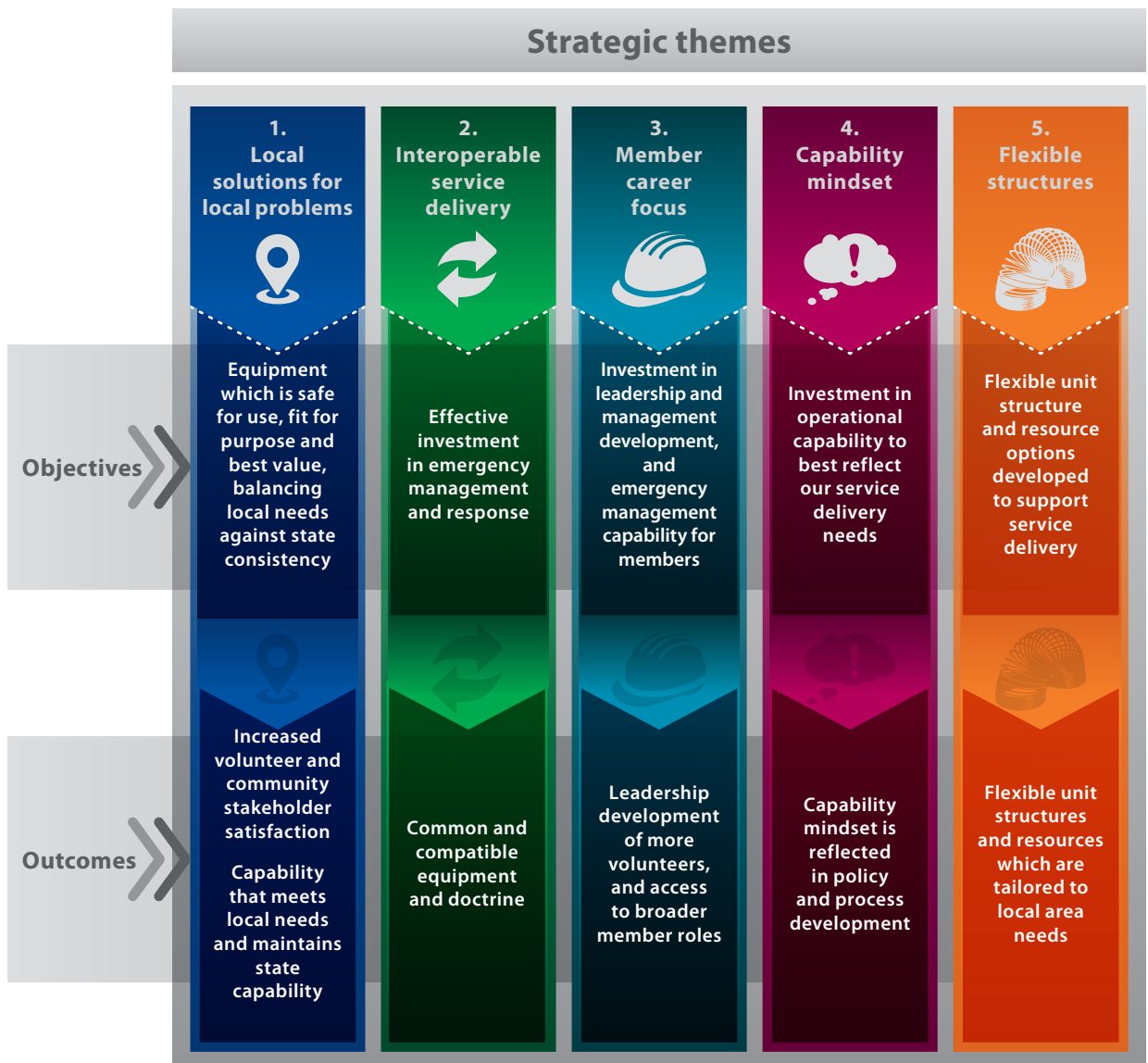
VICSES is committed to ensuring our operational service delivery – *readiness of personnel, resources, equipment and systems* – has the capacity to deliver our core and specialist services to the community before, during and after an emergency.

The Operational Capability Strategy 2017-2022 outlines the way we will work together in seeking contemporary approaches to our *operational* service delivery and in strengthening the capability of our people and the services, systems and structures to support that.

The Strategy will deliver this intent through five **Strategic Themes** that reflect on existing capability, examine core elements of capability required to sustain VICSES service delivery, and provide a pathway for developing and applying capability into the future.

The objectives and outcomes reflected below are explored in greater detail in *key actions, objectives and evaluating our success*, page 18-22.

Figure 1: Strategic Themes



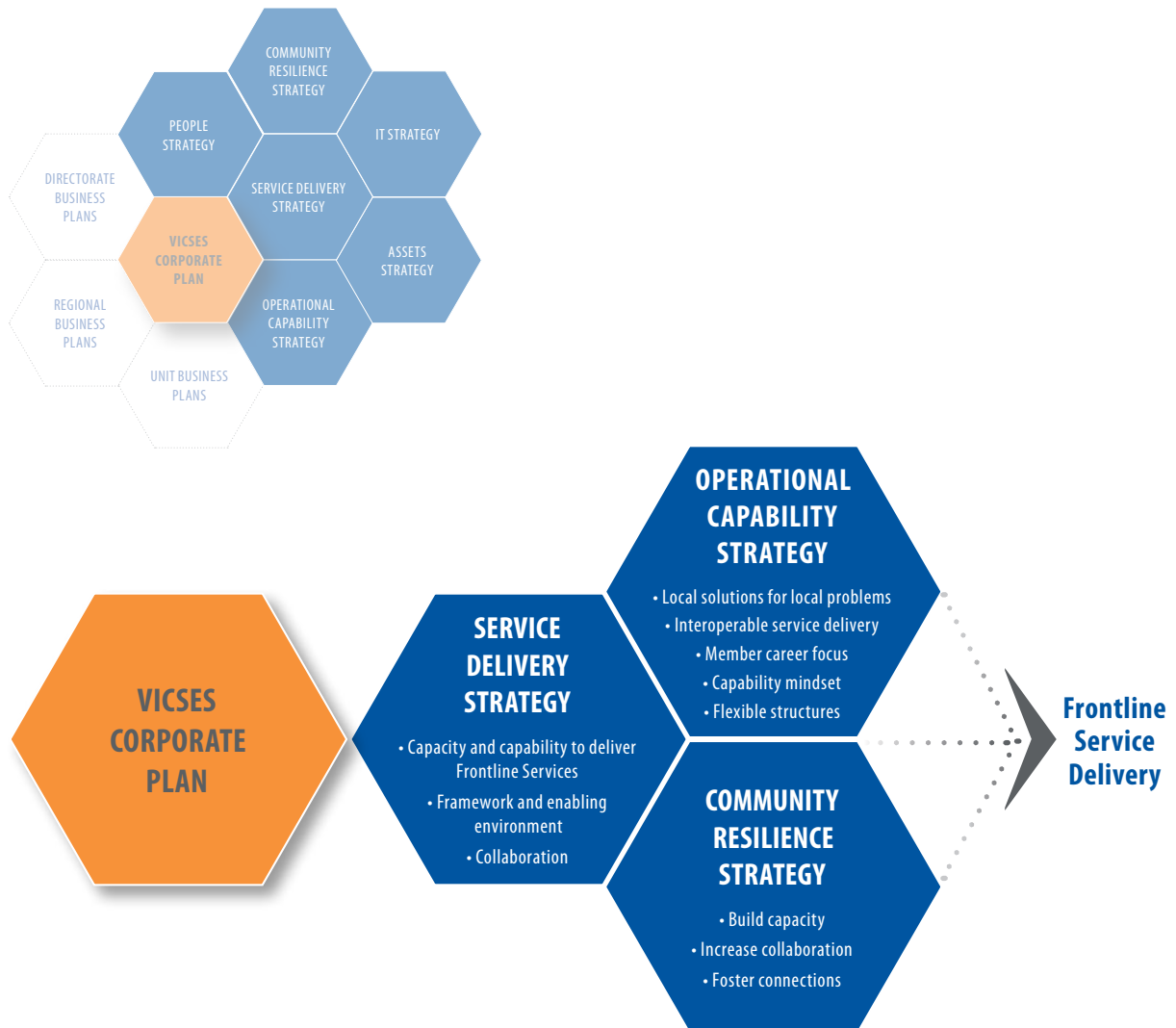


“SES started as an innovative organisation, it started from nothing. We have to be careful we don’t stifle this going forward, we need to protect this. Volunteers need to feel empowered.”

Enabling VICSES vision and goals

To achieve our vision of *Safer Communities – Together*, VICSES executes a variety of organisational strategies. They are dependent on each other and work together to help VICSES deliver on strategic priorities. The Strategy is an integral part of supporting the long-term vision of the VICSES Corporate Plan and Service Delivery Strategy 2025.

Figure 2: VICSES Strategy Framework December 2017

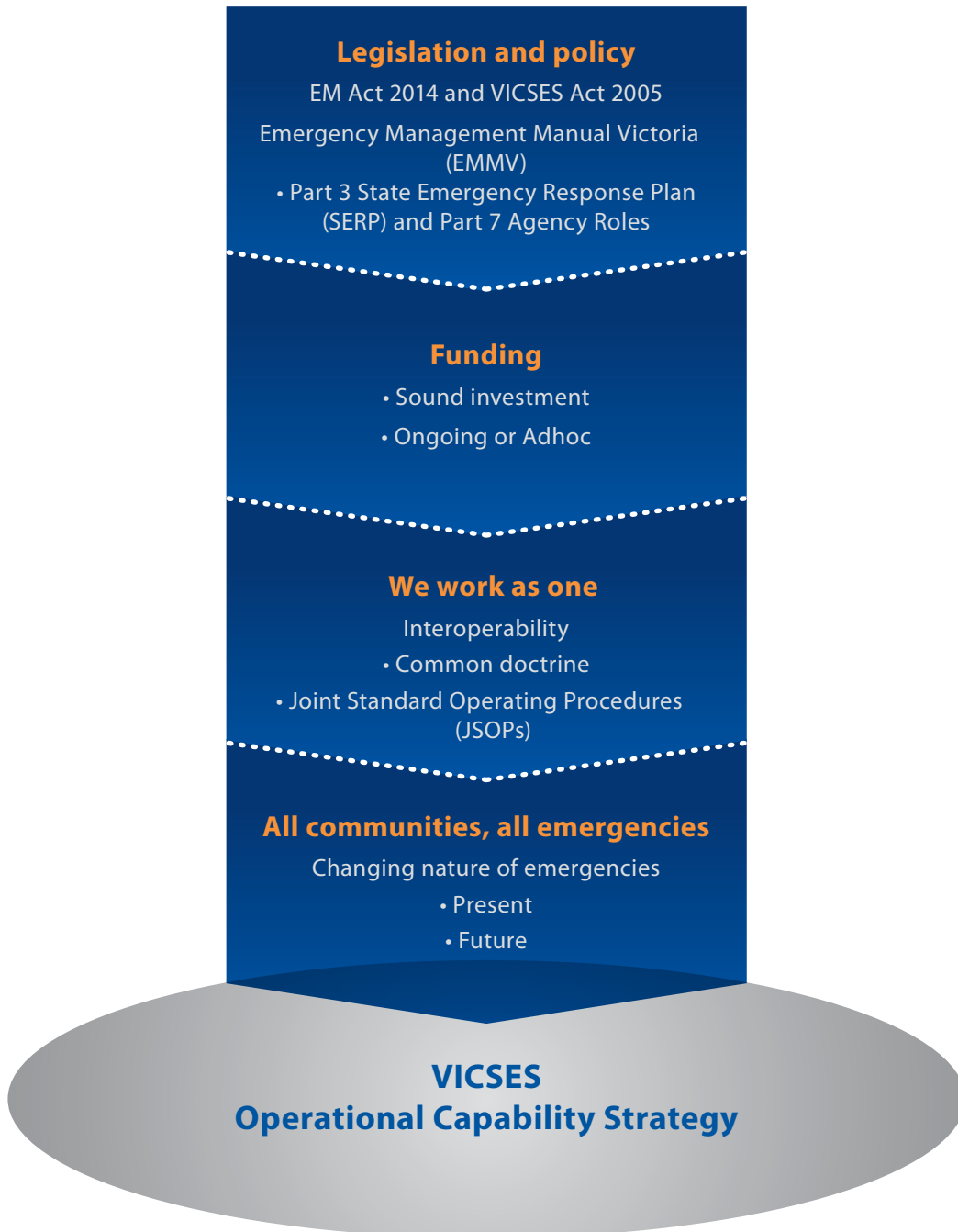


VICSES is also part of an interoperable system of emergency management provision, with a focus on service delivery before, during and after emergencies. The strategy is mindful of, and consistent with, the Emergency Management Victoria (EMV) Victorian Preparedness Goal and the Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council (AFAC) - National Capability Roadmap. The strategy also aligns to the current Victorian emergency management ethos of 'all communities, all emergencies' and 'we work as one' as outlined by the (Victorian) Emergency Management Commissioner.

Capability strategy development

In developing this strategy, VICSES is required to view operational capability through many lenses which influence our strategic outcomes.

Figure 3: VICSES Operational Capability Lenses



“It’s not about the incident anymore,
it’s about the consequences.”





Case study

A unit in Central region identified that they had a challenge turning out a crew in business hours during the working week. They worked with their local council to identify residents within their community, which resulted in them recruiting from local retirement villages. These retirees have formed a weekday, day time response Red Team, who attend anything the unit is paged to from 0800 to 1800. Any jobs outside these hours are the responsibility of the other unit members. The Red Team has been so successful, the unit is planning to recruit Red Team number two to bolster day time response even further.

**“Innovation requires bravery and boldness.
We must be open-minded about new equipment
that is fit for purpose for individual units.”**

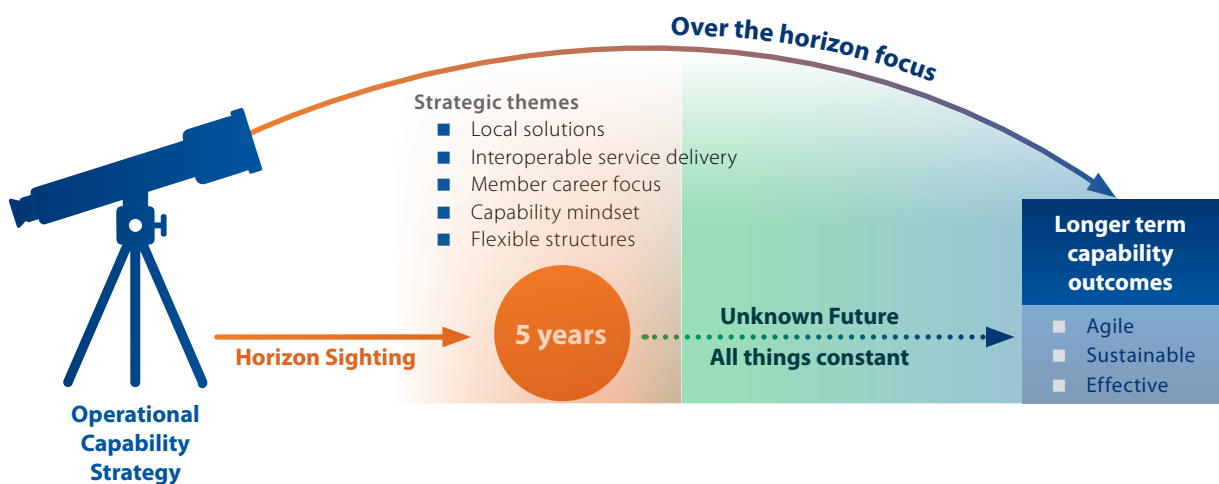
Strategic themes

A focus on the five strategic themes will direct a range of activities for further development via action plans over the next five years.

The strategy sets long-term outcomes for our operational capability, with annual performance reporting allowing us to monitor our progress towards achievement of the strategy.

As our operating environment may shift over the duration of the strategy adjustments may need to be made to our approach.

Figure 4: Operational Capability Strategy Focus



1. Local solutions for local problems

Opportunity and innovation

We will actively seek and promote new and better ways to meet the community's needs.

These enhancements will be subject to assessment, and it is important that the assessment and decision-making process includes members and staff from across the service with a focus on our end users.

We intend to enhance and promote our culture of innovation, and develop an effective process to properly evaluate these new ideas and methods – from application to implementation. This requires a measured approach to risk and timely decision making.

“Continuous improvement should be an ongoing priority.”

We will introduce processes that consider how to improve the balance between being consistent and flexible; an approach stating a consistent outcome or intent which allows a flexible application or delivery towards that outcome or intent. We will create an enabling environment, actively involving our members in developing innovations which are safe for use, fit for purpose and best value.

Case study

A Country Fire Authority (CFA) brigade in North West Region has developed and manages a Firefighter Rehab and Health Monitoring Unit, which ensures the health of firefighters out in the field. This unit checks firefighters are not compromised by heat and other health issues, and gives them an opportunity to rehydrate, relax and cool their core body temperatures before redeploying. The unit is staffed by CFA volunteers who have health training. The brigade extended an invitation to their neighbouring SES unit to train relevant volunteers in delivering this field-based healthcare, which also means the SES unit has heightened awareness of the unit, helps to deliver healthcare to our CFA colleagues, and calls on this unit to care for the health of their own members when attending events that are hot, arduous and drawn out.

The service requires the ability to meet local community expectations and needs. Units and their regions will be empowered to engage with a range of community stakeholders to identify and develop capability needs in an environment made up of stakeholders from other emergency service organisations, businesses and community members. This could result in an evolution of existing capability.

Whilst local solutions to capability development is desirable, we do need to avoid simply creating multiple versions of what capability looks like. Standardisation has given us increased workplace health and safety, asset quality, value for money, brand recognition and interoperable outcomes so we need to find the balance.



2. Interoperable service delivery

We work as one

EMV has led the development of a range of core capabilities across the state that will drive the development of multi-agency capability to deal with a range of emergencies that could impact Victoria. This work supports the concepts of 'all communities, all emergencies' and 'we work as one'. The strategy is mindful of these core capabilities and intends that, in collaboration with other emergency service organisations (ESOs) and stakeholders, we develop a 'joined-up' capability.

We will continue to commit to interoperability by focussing on:

1. **common** equipment and doctrine where VICSES undertakes tasks similar in nature to other organisations. This will lead to greater cohesive capacity across the emergency management sector.
2. **compatible** equipment and doctrine where VICSES has a defined requirement to undertake tasks in a way that differs to other organisations but can be used to enhance inter-agency capability.

Interoperability also applies within VICSES as we consider internal options to address capability and capacity. We will look to various models of member capability including developing pockets of multi-skilled members, pockets of members skilled in only a small number of roles across all members groups, along with developing experts in particular fields. It is difficult to identify real capacity due to the many hats members wear, so we will consider members developing a primary and secondary role only (e.g. Road Crash Rescue (RCR) and Storm and Flood, or Storm and Flood and Land Based Swift Water Rescue (LBSWR)) to prevent double or triple counting of capability. We must be mindful of how this may impact motivation and growth of members and their individual aspirations.

"Service delivery – does every unit need to do everything?"

We will consider capacity differently across units, reflecting the reality of their circumstances. For example, a large metropolitan unit versus a small rural township unit. Larger units could provide our surge capacity and long haul task forces, with smaller units providing local services based on a real ability to deliver on a range of services (opting in for surge and long haul capacity as their local circumstances allow).



“Our members are our greatest asset – buildings, trucks and equipment are just tools that support us and ultimately depreciate and cost.”



3. Member career focus

Member development, diversity, inclusion and career progression

We will reimagine volunteering – looking at new ways of recruiting, developing and retaining our members.

Our operational member needs to be more diverse and inclusive. We will embrace broader membership recruitment across the ‘before, during and after’ continuum of operations. Operations doesn’t start and end out of a rescue vehicle.

“Need to allow for the different lifestyles and lifecycles of people.”

We value the contributions of all our people regardless of the role they play across the continuum, whether cutting up a tree with a chainsaw, engaging with a community group, rescuing a person trapped in a car, managing administration functions, working in the State Logistics Centre or assisting municipalities with emergency management planning. All of these individual efforts contribute collectively to achieving our VICSES mission.

All members and staff should be supported in developing career options within VICSES with an understanding of the ‘social contract’. This means we actively develop our people but there is a clear expectation of a return on investment having regard to a member’s ability to contribute. Where a member is no longer able to contribute to a particular role, they may be assisted to transition to a more suitable, equally valuable role.

“A volunteer’s contribution can change dramatically during their life. We have to be careful not to stretch ourselves too much.”

Case study


A Central Region unit has a number of members who are shift workers and form the foundation of their daytime emergency response. They struggle to achieve their 60 per cent minimum training requirement at the weekly training nights so the unit has engaged the extensive knowledge and experience of three of their foundation unit members (105 years of experience between them) who are now either retired or semi-retired. They provide a weekly daytime training option and regularly have around five participants. Not only does this allow these shift workers to meet their minimum training requirements, other members also attend to reinforce the previous week's training, and daytime response capability is maintained. The skills and experience of these foundation members, which may otherwise be lost, is put to good use. The daytime training is directly responsible for improving volunteer retention, as the catch up option has kept some new recruits who otherwise would struggle to complete fundamentals or general rescue successfully.

One way that VICSES will invest is in the development of our leaders. We need members who not only have leadership skills and management capability, but who understand and value the contribution of all members regardless of the role they play within the organisation. By developing our leaders, we will be investing in all of our members.

We will focus on building our capability around our members rather than the other way around. This could mean developing training programs for our members whose lifestyles require us to support them differently, such as shift workers, fly-in fly-out workers, stay at home parents and retirees. We also need to focus on what our members can provide rather than what they can't.

To promote VICSES as a volunteer organisation of choice, we will review our membership policies to enable greater diversity and inclusion. We will continue to develop more diverse ways of creating capability, including specialist responders, and pathways for a range of activities such as emergency response, incident management, community engagement and unit management functions.

IMT capability in VICSES would benefit from greater member involvement. Our members bring a rich mix of life experience and abilities to the service and multi-agency IMT capability will be enhanced by investing in our members. VICSES will continue to drive IMT training, development and deployment opportunities for members.



"We need to strengthen career paths for volunteers."

“Capability is created by the right people, the right equipment and the right training.”



4. Capability mindset

Better capability development decisions

VICSES is a professional emergency service organisation providing a range of services across the ‘before, during and after’ continuum. We strive to properly cost and invest in the development, delivery and maintenance of any capability. Service delivery cost to the community is already offset by having a volunteer workforce. This allows us to better invest in the material requirements needed to develop, maintain and improve our quality emergency management capability.

During the discussion paper phase of the strategy, our members provided feedback suggesting that “we have great gear but not good sheds to keep it in”. Some members also suggested “we potentially waste on asset rotation”. There is an opportunity to review our approach to asset rotation.

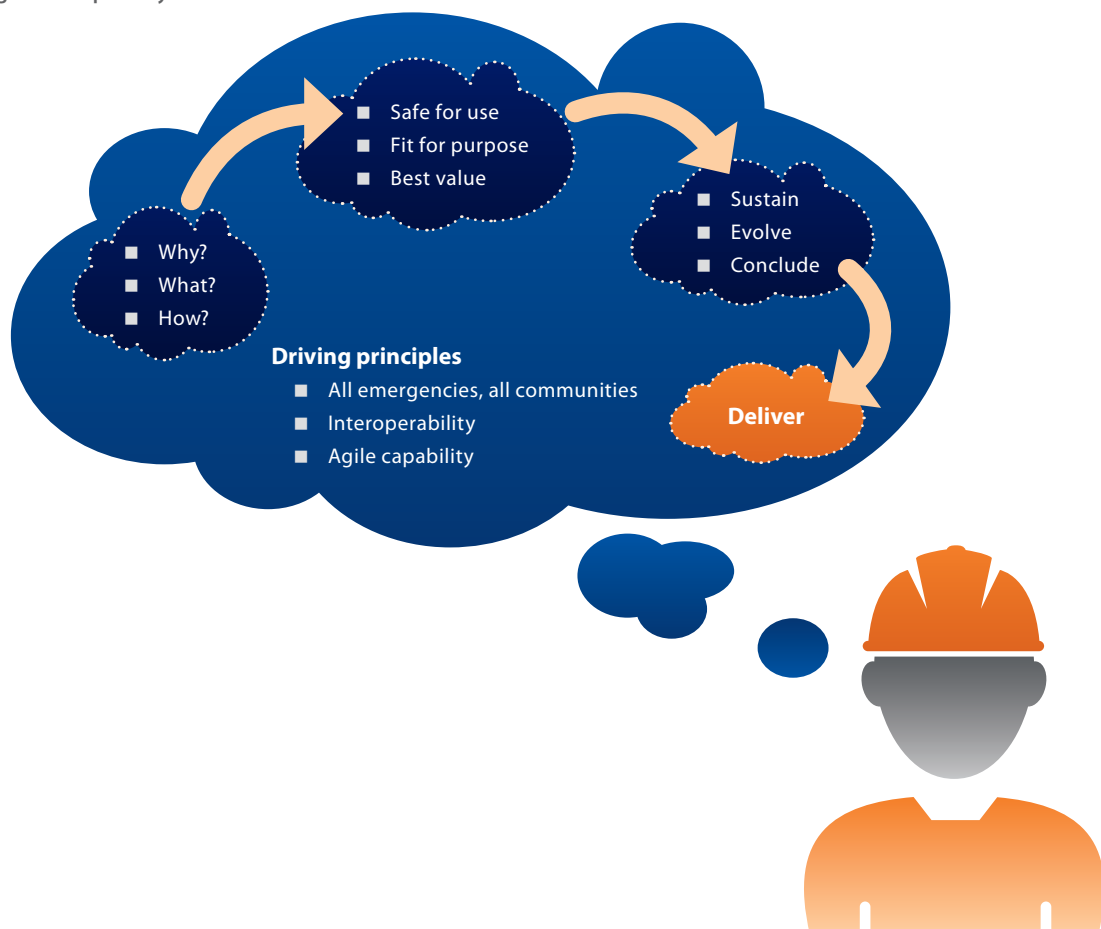
To achieve better capability outcomes a capability mindset needs to be developed across the service in everything we do. We need to answer a series of questions before we invest in any capability:

- Why, what and how the capability is required
- Is it safe for use, fit for purpose and best value
- Do we sustain, evolve or conclude the capability?

When we properly consider these answers we will make better investment decisions.

To support a capability mindset, VICSES will adopt an internal #weworkasone approach in all aspects of capability and service delivery.

Figure 5: Capability mindset





**“Cross pollination really helps.
We need to work together more and better.”**

The collection of transparent and reliable data will be used to identify capability and capacity, as well as to develop programs that will address emerging issues. Our capability may include a specialist response team (e.g. Land Based Swift Water Rescue), an asset (e.g. Mobile Command Vehicle) or a community engagement program (e.g. FloodSafe Program).

Business intelligence also requires access to data and analysis from other sources such as the CFA, Emergency Services Telecommunications Authority (ESTA), EMV and Inspector General – Emergency Management (IGEM). Both data and capability needs to be visible across the service (state, directorates, regions, units).

There is a tactical benefit to having a visible capability management system. Operationally our members need to know:

- who has it
- why do they have it
- does it work
- can we use it?

This avoids unnecessary capability duplication, and improves the way we access and utilise a capability across the agency.

Case study

The Operational Communications Enhancement Project (digital radio update project) is an example where the capability mindset has been applied from the outset. The project team have investigated the why, what and how in the capability process flow and identified a communications option which is safe for use and fit for purpose. Value for money balanced against coverage and operational need has been assessed. Before the project is completed, the team will be addressing the criteria of how this capability can be sustained and improved.

Case study

Units within a municipality in the South West Region are researching the option of adopting a cluster management approach. While they are not yet sure what that will look like, and how it may alter the responsibilities of each unit, they have identified the need to change the way they currently operate and maximise efficiencies across the units.



5. Flexible structures

Unit buildings and management structures

Future facility designs will allow a lifecycle approach to unit development. For example, we may identify the benefit of establishing a new unit in an area already being served by an existing unit. We would identify and acquire land for a future full unit and Local Head Quarters (LHQ) capability. In the first stage we may build a small satellite facility on a large parcel of land and over time build upon the original facility as the needs increase, until the final full LHQ requirements are realised.

We will encourage the application of hub and spoke models for units across the state. Any model should reflect the specific needs and triggers in the local area rather than apply a wholesale approach to all units. Regions and units are pivotal in determining the most appropriate model supported by available state resources.

We need to ensure that an equitable allocation of training, facilities and assets is maintained in any hub and

“Partnerships need to be locally owned and driven.
They must have flexibility to meet local needs.”

spoke model and that units are supported and strengthened throughout the process. For example, a spoke can either be a stand alone unit or satellite, depending on ability and needs. We could explore a properly supported cluster manager model that could see the retention of operational controllers at each unit within the hub and spoke cluster, but with the burden of administrative duties taken on by the cluster manager.

Key actions, objectives and evaluating our success

The following tables provide a snapshot of the objectives identified within the Operational Capability Strategy, the actions proposed to achieve them, the theme/s that each objective supports and how we propose to measure the action. It should be noted that action plans will be developed from this strategy, and these action plans will define the outcomes to be delivered.



Local solutions for local problems

Objective 1

Equipment which is safe for use, fit for purpose and best value, balancing local needs against state consistency

Secondary Theme/s Supported

- Flexible structures

Action	Outcomes
1.1 Develop and implement a mature unit asset procurement process which includes unit innovation and consultation, balancing state consistency and local flexibility	1.1 a) Holistic unit procurement process implemented b) Increased volunteer satisfaction with asset procurement process (baseline vs target – pre and post survey process) c) Local service area and regional consultation approach to capability need d) Future capability reflected in unit business plans





Interoperable service delivery

Objective 2

Effective investment in emergency management and response.

Action	Outcomes
2.1 Ensure VICSES operational capability doctrine are compared and aligned to relevant EMV JSOP's and other allied agency doctrine. Include the development of a doctrine review cycle to ensure VICSES agency doctrine remains aligned across ESO's	2.1 All VICSES doctrine is compared to other emergency services sector doctrine and aligned where appropriate. Include a rolling program of regular review and comparison of VICSES doctrine with other ESO doctrine
2.2 Develop a process that ensures proposed systems and equipment is compared to other ESO equipment to ensure it is either common or compatible where appropriate	2.2 All proposed systems and equipment is compared to ensure commonality or compatibility where appropriate upon implementation of process





Member career focus

Objective 3

Investment in leadership and management development, and emergency management capability for members.

Secondary Theme/s Supported

- Interoperable service delivery
- Local solutions for local problems

Action	Outcomes
3.1 Develop and roll out a suite of leadership and management development options designed to equip, inspire and empower both current and future leaders within our members	3.1 Identification of current and future leaders and an increase in member participation in leadership development programs
3.2 Increase level of member involvement in IMT development and deployment	3.2 An increase in members accredited for level 2 IMT roles and an increase in members endorsed for IMT roles other than level 2
3.3 Increase level of VICSES corporate staff being developed and utilised for a secondary IMT/EM role	3.3 An increase in the number of corporate staff developed in secondary EM role
3.4 Develop broader volunteering options and adopt a flexible approach to unit and regional capability, which reflects membership diversity	3.4 a) Implementation of role and training pathways project outcomes b) More flexible modes of volunteering and increased member numbers across relevant capabilities





Capability mindset

Objective 4

Investment in operational capability to best reflect our service delivery needs.

Secondary Theme/s Supported

- Interoperable service delivery
- Local solutions for local problems

Action	Outcomes
4.1 Develop and roll out workshops promoting the capability mindset and its adoption by all members and staff	4.1 Capability mindset being applied at all levels in capability decision making and reflected in policy and process development as well as in business plans at unit, region and state level
4.2 Access integrated business intelligence across the VICSES organisation to inform capability planning	4.2 Improved capability is achieved through more evidence based decision making
4.3 Develop a capability management system that provides visibility of the service's holistic capability and capacity	4.3 Improved access to agency capabilities to increase tactical and strategic utilisation across the service (unit, region, state)
4.4 Determine the capabilities that VICSES will invest in (lead or contribute to), and to what capacity	4.4 VICSES capabilities and capacities are defined and gaps identified



“It was the personal investment by members that has built the respected organisation that we have now.”



Flexible structures

Objective 5

Flexible unit structure and resource options developed to support service delivery

Secondary Theme/s Supported

- Interoperable service delivery
- Local solutions for local problems

Action	Outcomes
5.1 Implement a flexible unit structure and support model	5.1 Flexible unit structure and support model aligned to the Service Delivery Strategy 'hub and spoke' concept
5.2 Review the methodology for classification of units to inform modular building options and resource allocation to suit unit lifecycles	5.2 Unit building and assets options that account for unit lifecycle and support current and future needs of communities

Performance against the objectives will be measured and reported annually.

Factors that may influence our strategy

During the development of the strategy, a number of challenges (both internal within VICSES and external) have been identified. These could impact on our ability to meet some or all of the objectives outlined in the strategy. We have also identified varying levels of control we have over these challenges. There may well be currently unidentified challenges that arise during the term of this strategy.

Challenges	Controls
Legislation changes that impact upon the role, responsibilities and expectations of VICSES	VICSES to continue to strengthen relationships with government and EMV. Strong relationships in this space will allow advance knowledge of proposed legislation changes, and provide opportunity for VICSES to have input into this process and outcomes.
Sector shifts in policy that create strategic misalignment	VICSES to ensure active representation within emergency management sector, contributing to policy discussions and promoting the value of our contribution. This will allow VICSES to influence policy direction and provide sufficient warning when strategic realignment needs to be implemented.
Funding implications as a result of Government budget decisions or unexpected cost impacts to VICSES operating budget	Raise the profile of VICSES with government, conveying the value we add to our communities and making government aware of the return on investment our service provides. Increased awareness in government is likely to result in more financial support (or less reduction in financial support).
Significant operations that impact on business as usual activity including strategy implementation	Improve ability to maintain business as usual. An example of this is the development of volunteers into IMT roles, freeing up staff earlier to return to their main roles. Develop a surge capacity for significant events. Delay non critical business as usual output.
An increase in the incidence and severity of campaign emergency events such as floods, storms and bushfires and the amalgamation of traditional 'seasons' around flood, storm and fire.	Implementation of a surge capacity response. Collaboration with other emergency service organisations to support greater interoperability. Developing joint doctrine arrangements around collaborative response to all hazards and all emergencies by all services.
VICSES budget prioritisation that results in funding impact upon strategy implementation	Strategy implementation team to ensure VICSES executive and finance teams are aware of the cost/benefit position of the implementation of the Operational Capability Strategy and actively support this process. Adoption of this strategy by members will assist in its implementation.
Lack of buy in and commitment to the strategy and its implementation	All inclusive engagement program to present the strategy to members and staff by State Operations. Engagement of members and staff through the member review panel as advocates of the strategy in their regions and workplaces
Board or executive redirection of priorities	Redirection of priorities may be unavoidable, but keeping lines of communication open with the Board and Executive is an important mitigant to this risk. Open communication facilitates a sound understanding of strategic direction which will result in this direction being considered in future planning.
Population growth and decline in communities that exceed our ability to develop capability in a timely, effective and meaningful way	Population growth and decline is beyond our control. We can however work with our communities, local councils etc, to anticipate population trends and position our units to respond dynamically to these changes. This may include recruitment, realignment of unit capabilities, implementation of a hub and spoke structure for example.
Industrial impacts that create misalignment with the strategy	The engagement of our people and their support for this strategy will mitigate the risk of this occurring. Open communication and active involvement from our people in the implementation of and adjustments to the strategy engender ownership and adoption of the strategy.
Cultural and values based misalignment with the strategy	Regular reviews of the alignment of the strategy with VICSES culture and values. Testing in the real world of this alignment, with any discrepancies reported and resulting in adjustments to cultures, values, strategy as required.

Conclusion and way forward

This strategy identifies five themes for the next five years.

It sets our objectives and activities aligned to mid-term measurements of success aiming towards longer term outcomes.

Action plans will be developed and linked to the objectives. These action plans will be designed to parcel the work involved and will be cohesive – working towards common rather than disparate outcomes.

This strategy provides a pathway towards achieving future operational capability success.

The real work starts now. The success of the strategy depends on all of us adopting the strategy and its action plans. We need to maintain a common purpose and commitment to the outcomes. Whilst the action plans should provide for some level of flexibility, it's important that we remain confident of the pathway set in the strategy, balanced with the agility to shift course if our operating environment changes to a level that it is required to ensure the longer term goals are achieved.

Put simply, **#weworkasone**.



“Our members believe that this shouldn't be a once off and that this should be an ongoing consultation process with them.”

References

Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council (AFAC) - National Capability Roadmap
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Emergency Management Victoria (EMV) Victorian Preparedness Goal
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VICSES Service Delivery Strategy 2025
<https://hub.ses.vic.gov.au/group/hub/my-state/projects/current-projects/service-delivery-strategy>



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