

VICSES Community Resilience Strategy Renewal

2019 – 22





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Acknowledgments

The VICSES Community Resilience Strategy Renewal 2019-22 has been developed in consultation with our volunteers and staff (Our People) and a wide range of stakeholders. All contributions are greatly appreciated.



Foreword



I am pleased to present the VICSES Community Resilience Strategy Renewal 2019-22 (Strategy Renewal) to our volunteers and staff, along with our colleagues in the emergency management sector.

The Strategy Renewal supports VICSES' long-term vision to help build safer and more resilient communities, by providing sector leadership on cultivating stronger community connectivity, creating better engagement practices and building the capacity and capability of Our People.

Although we made significant progress throughout the term of our Community Resilience Strategy 2016-19 (2016-19 Strategy), we acknowledge there is more work to be done to realise, and deliver upon our strategy to ensure communities are prepared and know what to do before, during and after emergency events.

We thank you – our valued volunteers, staff, communities and partners – for your collaboration during our resilience journey so far, and look forward to your continued support over the next three years and beyond.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Griffin'.

Stephen Griffin
Chief Executive Officer,
Victoria State Emergency Service







RESCUE

Locker 5

X
LOAD
40KG

ADAM LACY
SUNBURY

SES
COMMANDER

VANESSA WHITE
SUNBURY

SES
RACHAEL WHITE
SUNBURY

SES
AAM
FOR A SAFER COMMUNITY

SES
FOR A SAFER COMMUNITY

Background

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

For VICSES, the 2016-19 Strategy was a landmark piece of work that helped to cement our evolution from an emergency response-centric organisation to one with a broader focus that included our efforts to build community resilience before, during and after emergencies. The 2016-19 Strategy detailed our plan for:

- How we will ensure we are accountable to deliver on our corporate imperatives.
- How we will join and connect with communities.
- How we will develop positive partnerships.
- How we will meet our traditional and emerging accountabilities as an emergency service organisation.
- How we will provide and share timely, effective reporting that is meaningful.

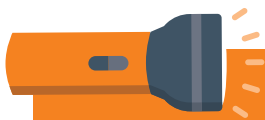
We collated annual findings and results throughout the duration of the 2016-19 Strategy to support continuous improvements of programs and initiatives during its lifetime. These are publicly available as Yearly Outcomes Reports on our website at www.ses.vic.gov.au.

Each Outcomes Report presents key highlights, activities and outcomes from the 2016-19 Strategy's implementation, including our achievements against the strategic objectives and reports on the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

The Strategy Renewal extends the approach introduced in the 2016-19 Strategy for a further three years.



Milestones in sector community resilience reform



In 2015, as the VICSES Community Education Strategy 2011-16 approached end-of-life, VICSES looked to build on existing hazard-based education programs to transition to a community participatory- engagement approach that better supported the sector reform to build safer and more resilient communities.

The transition to a community resilience approach was supported in the VICSES Corporate Plan 2015-18 and VICSES Service Delivery Strategy 2025, and these subsequently became the primary corporate drivers for the development of the 2016-19 Strategy.



Development of a (state) community resilience framework and user-guide for implementation was one of 30 state-level strategic actions detailed within the Victorian Emergency Management Strategic Action Plan (SAP) 2015-18 under the auspice of the (Victorian) State Crisis and Resilience Council (SCRC).



In 2015 there was minimal guidance for the sector to pursue a community resilience approach in the State of Victoria outside of the strategic setting, i.e. limited guidance for designing and implementing the resilience principles and concepts into agency specific service delivery models and programs.



In late 2015, VICSES Board and Executive endorsed the development of an agency-specific resilience strategy to realise VICSES vision and goals. A consultation paper was drafted as the primary tool for consultation with volunteers, staff and key stakeholders. Consultation was conducted from October 2015 to February 2016.

At this time, the Emergency Management Victoria (EMV) policy framework for community resilience was also in its formative stages. In April 2016, the Emergency Services Leadership Group (ESLG), the sector's overarching governance body chaired by EMV and agency heads (IGEM 2016), developed and approved a project plan.

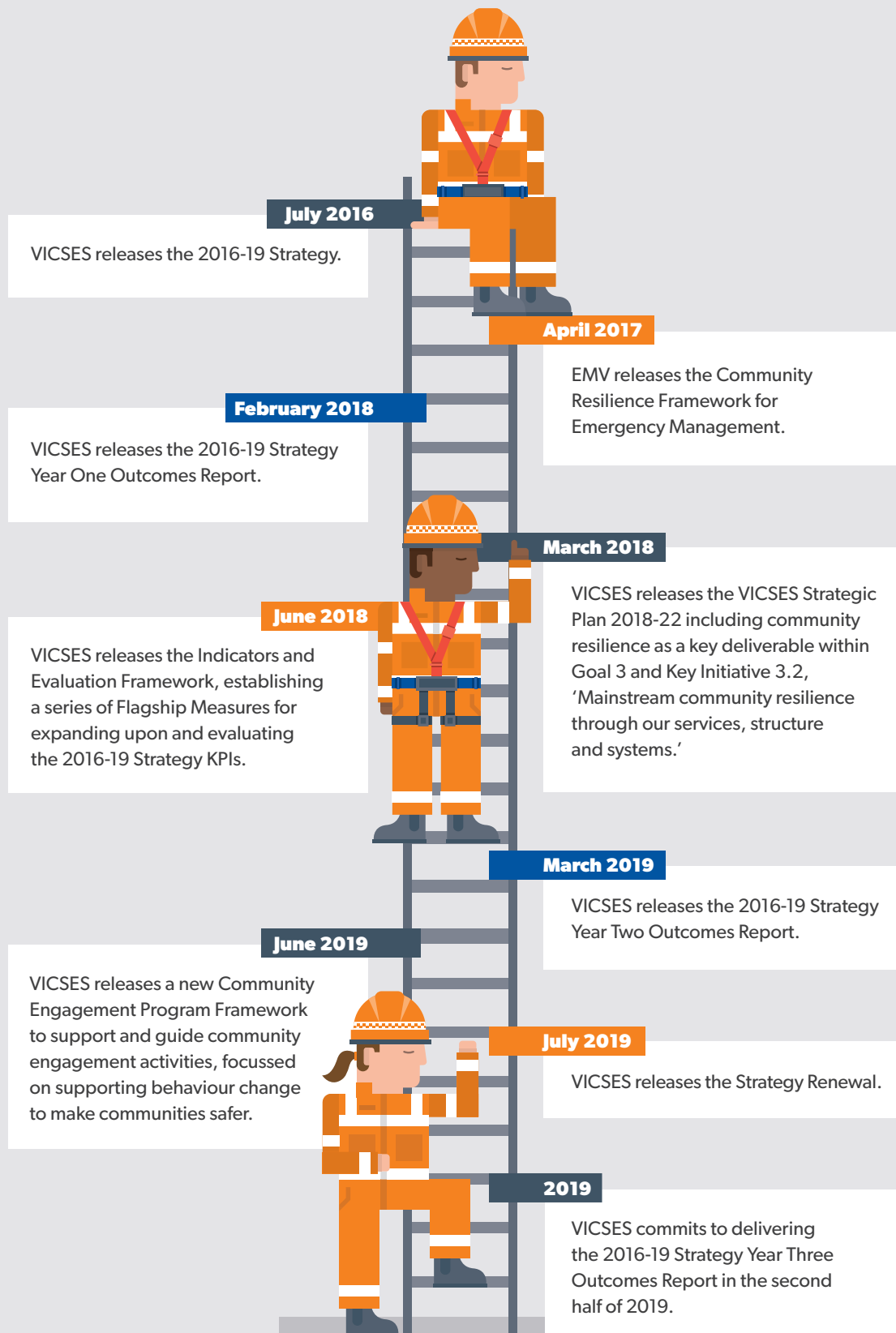


A project brief for a Community Resilience Framework for emergency management in Victoria (June 2016), developed by EMV, noted the VICSES strategy as the sector's example of an agency-specific resilience approach. The VICSES 2016-19 Strategy was scheduled for release shortly after.



During this time, the Resilient Melbourne Strategy, which was launched in June 2016, was also under development for the 32 metropolitan Melbourne councils in the greater Melbourne footprint, primarily designed to link to, and support urban resilience initiatives of key partners on a metropolitan-scale.







Purpose of the Strategy Renewal

The Strategy Renewal extends the 2016-19 Strategy for a further term of three years, and provides guidance to Our People on how we can work together to build safer and more resilient communities.

The Strategy Renewal builds on the key achievements and lessons learnt during the initial term, and provides a road map for the design and development of community resilience activities, and delivery and evaluation of programs and resources throughout the next three years. It reaffirms our commitment to better understanding community attitudes, key drivers and barriers, and details how we will continue to join with our communities before, during and after emergency events, develop positive partnerships and provide timely, effective reporting to the Victorian Government.

The Strategy Renewal enables Our People to support communities to better understand the full scale of emergency events by:

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

Enabling VICSES vision and goals

For VICSES, the Strategy Renewal is an important enabler for realising our vision of Safer Communities – Together.

The Strategy Renewal sits alongside a number of key interdependent organisational strategies (see Figure 1) that work together to help us deliver on strategic priorities, with the VICSES Strategic Plan at the centre.

Goal 3 of the VICSES Strategic Plan 2018-22 includes community resilience as a key deliverable, advocating that ‘We will work with and empower the community to build confidence and resilience.’ This goal is driven by key initiative 3.2 to

‘Mainstream community resilience through our services, structure and systems’.

Launched in March 2018, the Strategic Plan was developed through extensive engagement with Our People, our sector and our local communities. With a term of four years, it sets ambitious targets for the sustainability of our organisation, our community reach, and our network strength and connectivity with others to build safer and more resilient communities.

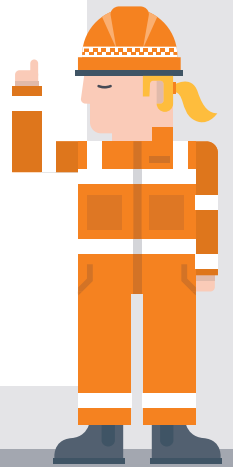


Figure 1: VICSES Strategy Framework – July 2019.





Community resilience

A disaster resilient community is one in which community members work together with emergency services, local authorities and other organisations to understand and manage the risks that may affect them.

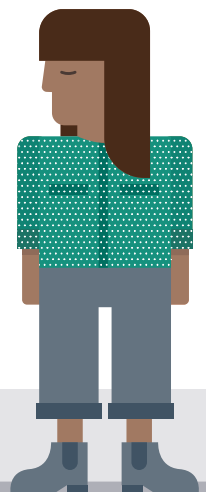
This approach is supported by the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030¹ (of which Australia is a signatory) and the National Strategy for Disaster Resilience (2011)².

For the purpose of the 2016-19 Strategy launched in July 2016, VICSES adopted EMV's definition of a resilient community, as outlined in A Modern Emergency Management System for Victoria (October 2015):

"Increasing a community's resilience involves a focus on the strength and sustainability of a community's infrastructure and institutions, as well as building and strengthening the links between people and the services, systems and structures that support the community to function."

VICSES notes however that within the Community Resilience Framework for Emergency Management released in April 2017, EMV has updated the definition of resilience to:

"The ability to survive, adapt and thrive no matter what kind of chronic stresses and acute shocks experienced³."



- 1 Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, 2015–2030.
- 2 National Strategy for Disaster Resilience, Council of Australian Governments, 2011.
- 3 Community Resilience Framework for Emergency Management, Emergency Management Victoria, 2017.

Obstacles to achieving community resilience

A critical component to the Strategy Renewal building blocks has been the many years’ of research conducted by VICSES to provide scientific rigour and a base of evidence for what is proposed.

This research has explored the chronic stresses and acute shocks faced by communities, in addition to their levels of understanding, and their attitudes and behaviours toward emergency preparedness.

Our early research, which served as the foundations for the 2016-19 Strategy, found as expected, that some members of the community were actively preparing and maintaining readiness for the next emergency event, while a large proportion of the community was not interested and therefore, not planning to do anything to prepare for future emergency events.

VICSES also found that hazard awareness does not necessarily translate to higher levels of preparedness or action across the preparedness chain (see Figure 2), and is influenced by a number of key drivers and barriers that can and will vary significantly across Victoria’s diverse communities.

Throughout 2016-19 VICSES reviewed its previous research, conducted new research and partnered with other organisations in a variety of research projects. This research has trialled new approaches to engagement and warnings, explored the potential for ‘just-in-time’ preparedness to support community decision making immediately before a severe weather event, and revealed that messages that connect on an emotional level and contain a simple and easy ‘call-to-action’ are more likely to be effective.

VICSES will continue to leverage and drive the research agenda throughout 2019-22 to ensure that our strategic approach and activities are grounded in evidence, realise continuous improvement opportunities and are as effective as they can be.

Figure 2: VICSES preparedness chain.





Strategic objectives, goals and outcomes

The Strategy Renewal aligns with VICSES’ corporate intent, and includes a set of strategic objectives, goals and outcomes (see Figure 3) to embed the approach in all VICSES activities, plans, programs and systems.

Figure 3: VICSES Community Resilience Strategy Renewal objectives, goals and outcomes.

Strategic Objectives	#1 Build Capacity	#2 Increase Collaboration	#3 Foster Connections
Goals	VICSES builds community knowledge and skills to support communities to prepare for, respond to and recover from emergency events	VICSES has effective partnerships through which we can collaborate and facilitate inclusive participation to enable community led activities and solutions	VICSES is an innovative and influential leader that fosters community connectivity and promotes positive behaviour change
Strategic Outcomes	Individuals, households and businesses believe that preparing for future emergency events is important	Program and service delivery with others is collaborative, integrated and community centred	Better connected communities that are able to adapt for future emergency events

How we will deliver

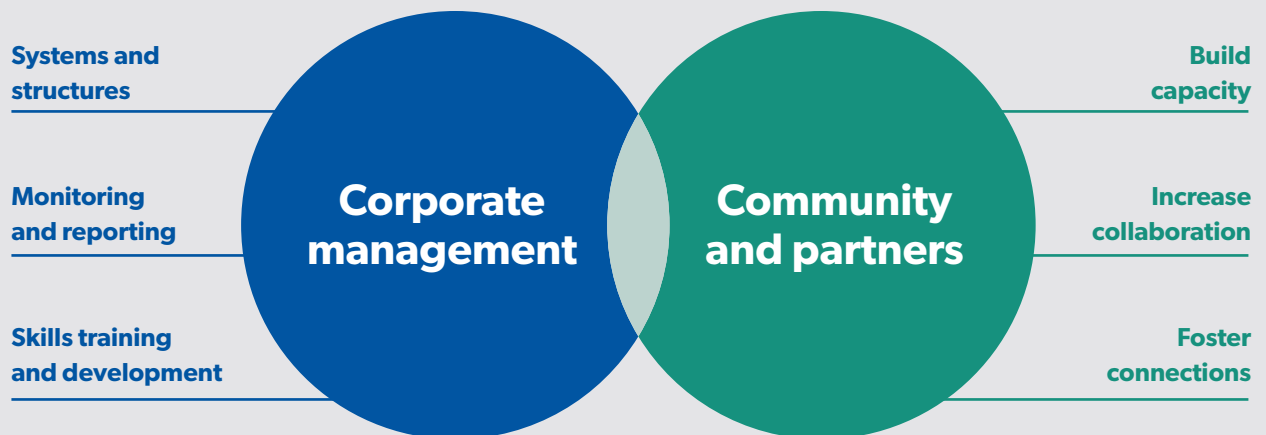
Building on the achievements delivered in the first three years of the 2016-19 Strategy and in line with the implementation blueprint introduced in the 2016-19 Strategy Year One Outcomes Report (see Figure 4), VICSES will continue to categorise activities under two distinct focus areas.

Initiatives will be delivered through a range of activities detailed in business plans at a state, region and unit level.

1. Corporate management: The internal processes, training (skills and knowledge) and controls required to ensure adequate and comprehensive policies, procedures and methodologies exist for rolling out, recording and tracking community resilience-related activities for performance, including adequacy of training to those responsible for implementation.

2. Community and partners: Supporting the delivery of well-researched, viable and localised community and partner activities for VICSES service delivery, including emergency management planning, community risk, education, engagement, and public information programs and activities as per the Strategy Renewal’s three strategic objectives.

Figure 4: Implementation blueprint.



How we will practically apply

VICSES acknowledges that there is no one-size-fits-all approach: Victorian communities are diverse, speaking more than 260 languages and dialects, and following 135 faiths and religions.

What works well for one community may not necessarily be meaningful in another, and with such diversity, our programs and service delivery may vary considerably across the state.

At a practical level our programs and services can be supported and maintained with all levels of community, including: businesses and commerce, children and youth networks, councils, faith groups, industry, local sporting clubs, neighbourhood houses, not-for-profit organisations, other emergency service organisations, schools, tourism networks and voluntary groups.

VICSES has developed a new Community Engagement Program Framework (see Figure 5) as a step-by-step approach to supporting and guiding our community engagement activities and ensuring they are measurable, and can be adapted to suit diverse audiences.

The framework provides VICSES members with a practical approach for engaging with their communities to increase preparedness and resilience.

Figure 5: VICSES Community Engagement Program Framework.



- A clear and specific objective
- You have gained the attention, interest and intent to act from the target audience
- ONE small action step
- Results are measurable, reported and celebrated



How we will support Our People

VICSES will continue to invest in and support Our People to have the skills, competencies, support and structures necessary to meet our current and future needs.

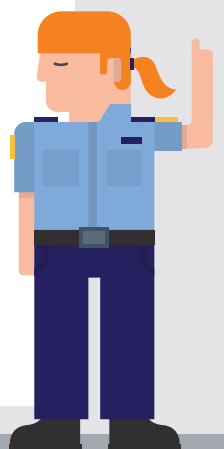
A range of new member materials developed throughout the term of the 2016-19 Strategy will support Our People to deliver our programs to the community and partners.

These include:

- Creation and promotion of role and training pathways for volunteers interested in a career in community engagement.
- Member Support Guides, community engagement materials, key messages for what to do before, during and after emergencies, new images and video libraries and digital assets to support local campaigns.
- VICSES behaviour change campaigns, promotional events and a seasonal schedule of key dates and events.
- A social media strategy and annual theme calendar to focus activities across VICSES' local, regional and state-level social media pages and maximise community engagement online.
- A revised Community Engagement Facilitators course designed to build key competencies and skills in community engagement.

Work is progressing on the development of a holistic risk approach to how we assess and manage day-to-day activity risk, and collate and analyse community engagement and community resilience-building activities.

We have also established a number of new collaborative partnerships with academia, business and other emergency service organisations. A great example is the work we are doing with Red Cross to enhance programs that have a common goal, seek to develop increased efficiencies across both organisations, and extend our key messages and reach within the community.

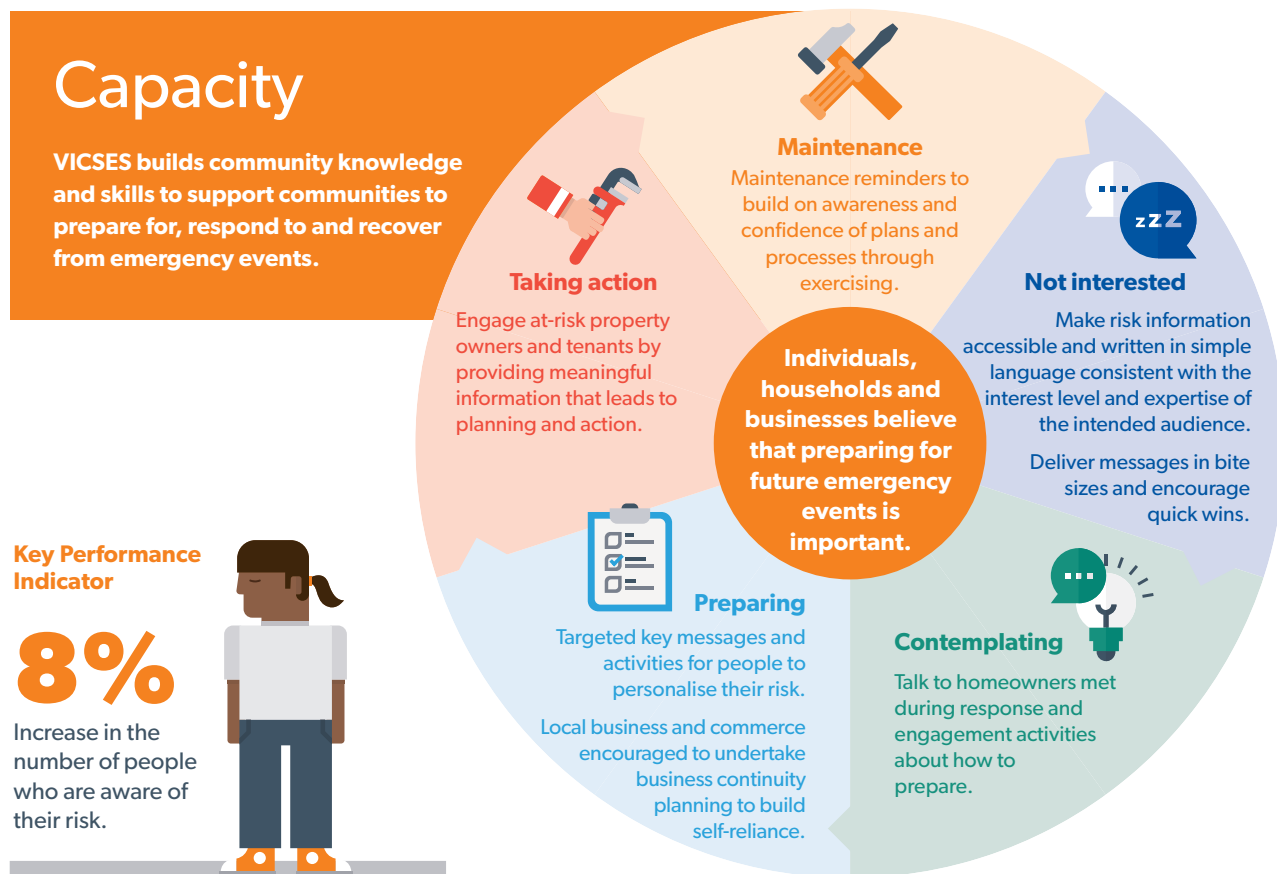


Evaluating our success

A key objective of the Strategy Renewal is to increase the level of interest from, and support behaviour change within, our communities, to help them to be more aware, informed and prepared for emergencies – supporting them to understand their risk, and the relevance of taking action before, during and after emergencies.

VICSES will continue to use the resilience models for ‘Capacity,’ ‘Collaboration’ and ‘Connections’ introduced in the 2016-19 Strategy (see Figure 6). These models provide guidance for the future design and development of our community engagement programs and resources, provide detail for Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), and shape how VICSES will invest effort in the delivery and evaluation of these services to the community and our partners.

Figure 6 – VICSES Community Resilience Strategy Renewal resilience models.



Collaboration

VICESES has effective partnerships through which we can collaborate and facilitate inclusive participation to enable community led activities and solutions.

Key Performance Indicator

12%

increase in programs that partner with others to engage the community.



Connections

VICESES is an innovative and influential leader that fosters community connectivity and promotes positive behaviour change.

Key Performance Indicator

15%

increase in activities that directly engage with the community.



How we will measure

The VICSES Indicators and Evaluation Framework (Framework) introduced in 2018-19 will support how we assess and maintain accountability for our progress against the strategic objectives, goals and outcomes of the Strategy Renewal; and how we deliver on our broader strategic priorities.

The scope of the Framework is limited to VICSES’ community engagement and community resilience-building activities; however it is also designed to be flexible and scalable for the future.

Phase one: Flagship Measures and Outcome Indicators

Phase one of the Framework established nine Flagship Measures and Outcome Indicators relating to disaster impact to ensure our efforts to build community capacity focus on long-term community behaviour change. In turn, this approach will support us to demonstrate our success against the Strategy Renewal KPIs and broader VICSES strategic priorities (see Figure 7).

Figure 7: Flagship Measures and Outcome Indicators.

Strategic Objectives	Outcome Indicator	Measure
Build Capacity	Increase levels of preparedness for emergencies.	<p>Measure 1.1: Proportion of households that have a documented emergency plan.</p> <p>Measure 1.2: Proportion of households that have undertaken hazard-relevant maintenance actions.</p>
	Reduce occurrence of preventable emergency events.	Measure 1.3: Proportion of people who avoid entering floodwater.
	Increase community understanding of potential risks and impacts of emergencies.	Measure 1.4: Proportion of people who understand warnings.
Increase Collaboration	Increase collaborative decision making in the design of emergency preparedness, response, and recovery.	Measure 2.1: Satisfaction of key stakeholders involved in community engagement program development, delivery, or evaluation.
Foster Connections	Increase community engagement in emergency management.	Measure 3.1: Program quality assessed against the IAP2 Quality Assurance Standard.
Reducing Disaster Impacts: How do we define success in the longer term	Reduce occurrence of preventable emergency events.	Measure 4.1: Number of fatalities from floods, storms, landslides, earthquakes, and tsunamis.
		Measure 4.2: Number of homes damaged by floods, storms, landslides, earthquakes, and tsunamis.

VICSES acknowledges that it will take many years to observe and measure change in community behaviour and disaster impacts. Sustained behaviour change is a long-term goal requiring continued efforts over a number of years.

Phase two: Activity Measures

Phase two of the Framework will establish a set of Activity Measures, expected for release in 2019-20. This process will take into consideration the information that will need to be collected and analysed in order to best assess our effectiveness when delivering community engagement and community resilience-building activities.



How we will report

As per the 2016-19 Strategy, VICSES will publish the findings and results of the Strategy Renewal annually during its lifetime as a series of outcome reports. These will be available for the public at www.ses.vic.gov.au.

The outcome reports will measure our achievements against the strategic objectives and KPIs and support continuous improvement of programs and initiatives during the lifetime of the Strategy Renewal.



Key references

- 100 Resilient Cities (2016), Resilient Melbourne Strategy.
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- Victoria State Emergency Service (2019), Community Engagement Program.
- Victoria State Emergency Service (2019), Community Resilience Strategy 2016-19, Year Two Outcomes Report 2019.

Contact us

To provide feedback and input to assist us in the continued delivery of the Strategy Renewal, please contact us at resilience@ses.vic.gov.au or through your local VICSES regional office.



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