



2023 – 2027

VICSES Strategic Plan



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

Introduction and Foreword

Victoria State Emergency Service (VICSES) is a leader in emergency management, providing emergency assistance to thousands of Victorians every year.

As we continue our organisational growth and service delivery to best support our communities, we are pleased to present our roadmap for the next four years – the **VICSES Strategic Plan 2023-2027**.

Our People are at the heart of our organisation. In developing this plan, we engaged closely with our volunteers and staff, in addition to consulting with a wide range of key stakeholders, partners, and community members.

Building on the achievements of the 2018-2022 Strategic Plan, including the implementation of the VICSES Operating Model Review and improvements in culture and conduct, this plan leads a clear pathway forward for our organisation. The plan outlines our key outcomes, priorities, and measures, ensuring that we will be a progressive and agile leader in emergency preparedness and response.

VICSES faces a period of marked challenge and opportunity. This plan ensures that we will remain positioned to meet the ongoing needs of our communities, and rise to the opportunities presented over the next four years and beyond. It sets ambitious goals for our capability, systems, culture, and our leadership within the emergency management sector.

Everything we do as an organisation, feeds into achieving this plan. Our strength in Our People, capabilities, and strategic partnerships, will lead to increased community safety, and help shape the future of VICSES.

We are excited to present this plan with you, and look forward to continuing to demonstrate our Vision of **Safer Communities – Together**.



Greg Wilson
Chair



Stephen Griffin
Chief Executive Officer



Our People

VICSES has served Victorians since 1950, and is a significant contributor and leader in emergency management. Our volunteers and staff are highly skilled, well equipped, and trained comprehensively in a wide range of emergency environments.

Our volunteers are the backbone of VICSES, serving the Victorian community 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, every day of the year. Today, we comprise more than 4,800 volunteers and 220 employees, all crucial to the success of VICSES and our vision to make the community safer, together.

We actively embrace volunteerism and strive to be an organisation of choice for people and partners. Diversity is key to our success, and VICSES is proud to celebrate an inclusive and supportive culture across the entire organisation. We're extremely proud of our diverse workforce; 34% of VICSES volunteers are female, 27% of which are in our unit leadership teams. In regional and metropolitan locations across the State, we strive to reflect the diversity of our communities and drive a safe, inclusive, and progressive culture.



VOLUNTEERS

Today, we comprise more than 4,800 volunteers and 220 employees, all crucial to the success of VICSES



4,869* **222***

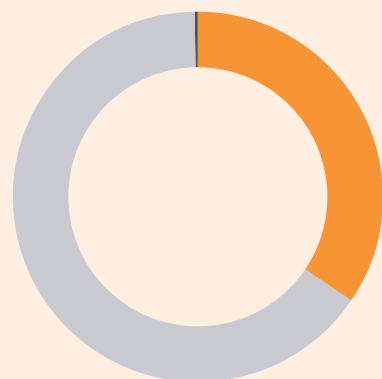
Volunteers

Staff

**Includes all categories of registered volunteers.*

**Ongoing roles only. Excludes fixed term and casual staff.*

34.5%
Female
66.3%
Male
0.2%
Other



WORKFORCE

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

Our services

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.

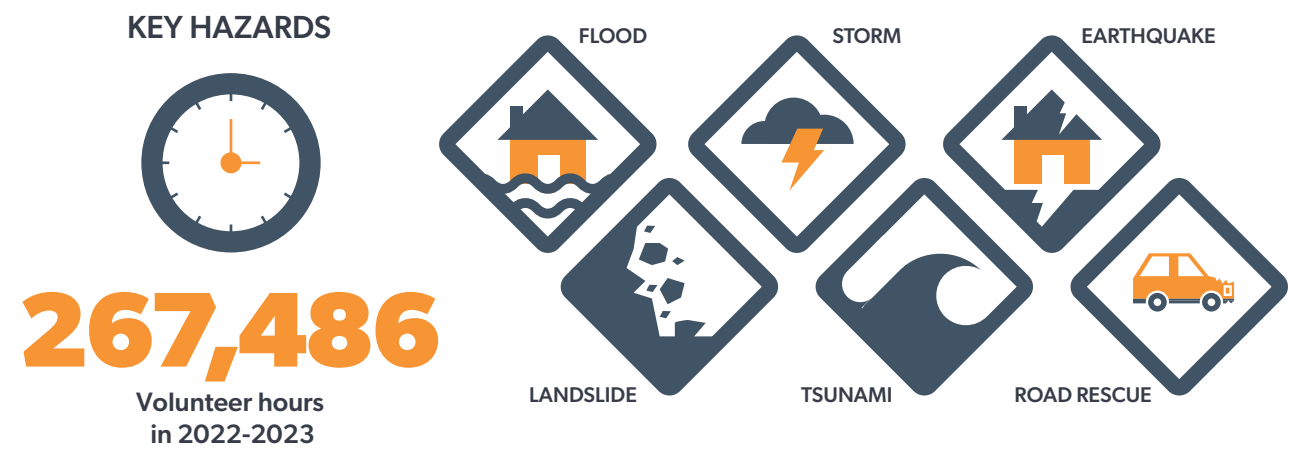
We are the control agency for flood, storm, tsunami, earthquake, and landslide. We also provide the largest road crash rescue network in Victoria, and support our partner emergency service agencies across a range of operational and Incident Management Team roles during emergency events.

In 2022-2023 VICSES recorded one of its busiest years in our history, responding to more than 33,300 incidents and contributing a total of 267,486 hours of operational time to helping Victorians in need.

VICSES is a significant contributor and leader in emergency management. We strive to develop and lead best practice by focusing on furthering our core business activities, and by strengthening our relationships and

partnerships in building more resilient communities that know what to do before, during, and after an emergency.

We have a strong value proposition for government, community, employers, and partners, and pride ourselves on being a values-based organisation of choice for Our People.



RESPONSE

In 2022-2023 VICSES responded to more than 33,300 incidents



Strategic context

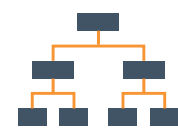
Systemic forces that will shape our operating environment over the next four years



The frequency and intensity of extreme weather events has been increasing over recent years. This is expected to continue and will exacerbate existing pressure on our financial, volunteer, and staff resources.



Fiscal constraints will exert greater budgetary pressure on us and make it more challenging to secure sustained funding.



Current emergency management reform initiatives will impact how we operate. This could include the scope of our role in the sector, changes to our reporting and governance structures, our access to funding, and how we strengthen our volunteer base.



We operate within a complex regulatory and compliance environment. This introduces strategic constraints and operational realities that have been key considerations during the development of the 2023-2027 Strategic Plan.



Our 2023-2027 Strategic Plan must address key challenges

Through the consultation process, we learned a lot from our volunteers, staff, and sector partners that informed our strategic direction.

In developing the 2023-2027 Strategic Plan, we engaged with a broad range of internal and external stakeholders, including volunteers, staff, emergency management sector partners, and senior executives. The perspectives of these key stakeholders has been important in informing our strategic direction over the next four years.

Our volunteers indicated that in the past four years we have enhanced community risk awareness and provided positive services to the public, but also noted that we need to attract and maintain a viable and effective volunteer service as demand for our services grows. They identified that unit leadership and culture, community engagement, and decision-making consultation processes were key areas for improvement.

Our staff highlighted that our sustainability was threatened by the increasing frequency and intensity of emergency weather incidents and tightening fiscal conditions. They reinforced the need for investment in workforce capacity and training, and the opportunity to leverage resources from other organisations in the sector.

Our emergency management sector stakeholders appreciate our critical role in the sector, but indicated we could more clearly demonstrate how we create value for the sector and for the community as a whole. They raised the importance of clarifying our core services, which will help us to take a stronger leadership role in the sector and improve the effectiveness of our advocacy for our immediate and future needs.

The strategic diagnosis process identified several strategic challenges:

Strategic challenges relating to our role and scope

- Meeting the demand created by increased incident frequency and intensity.
- Navigating potential changes introduced by sector reform that could impact our role, scope, governance, reporting structure, and funding situation.
- Managing ongoing compliance with regulatory frameworks.

Strategic challenges relating to our organisation

- Maintaining an effective and viable volunteer network with strong cultural leadership.
- Building and maintaining the desired organisational culture and operational capability.
- Securing funding to build operational capability outside times of crisis.

Strategic narrative

In developing this four-year strategy, we have focused on what we want to achieve, our distinctive value proposition, the scope of our operations, and the capabilities and systems that will enable us to achieve success.

Our strategy statement outlines that as a volunteer emergency service, we will focus on our volunteer experience, sector leadership, partnerships, capabilities, and our people to increase community safety.

This statement is underpinned by a set of four outcomes that we will strive to achieve by 2027. Each strategic outcome has its own clear priorities and measures.

We will implement flexible initiatives that further these strategic outcomes and priorities, reflecting the dynamic context in which we operate.

Our mission, vision, and values continue to guide our work and will not change as part of this plan.

Our 'strategy on a page' articulates our strategy from 2023 to 2027.



Major shifts we have identified that are necessary to achieve success



Partner and sector leadership:

We need to harness our brand and reputation to maximise our sector leadership and influence, utilising partnerships to balance our resource constraints.



Volunteers and staff:

We need to ensure that our volunteer base better reflects our communities.



Scope of work:

We need to focus on our priority services, so we deploy our finite resources to areas of greatest need and impact.



Value proposition:

We need to clarify our core roles so that our partners, community, and government understand the benefits we deliver.



Community engagement:

We need to continue to build safer and more resilient communities, create better engagement practices, stronger community connectivity, and build on the capacity and capability of our people.

SCOPE OF WORK

We need to focus on our priority services, so we deploy our finite resources to areas of greatest need and impact



Strategy on a page

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 VISION

Safer Communities - Together

OUR CORE VALUES



We pride ourselves on our credibility



We are part of our community



Safety drives our decisions



Focused and adaptable



Together we are VICSES

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 engage the 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 communities.

KEY MEASURES

Increased level of community engagement.
Increased access to preparedness resources.
Increased community preparedness.
Increased community knowledge and action.

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.

Elaboration on outcomes

Outcome 1

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

As a significant contributor to Victoria's emergency management and response, we need to operate in a way that enables us to best deliver services in a rapidly changing service-demand environment. We know that this may mean changes to the things we do or the way services are delivered. As emergency weather events become more frequent and intense, it will become even more important that we clarify our role with sector stakeholders, so that we are supported over the longer term to meet community demands. To achieve this we must challenge ourselves to be a bold and influential leader in the sector.

Our priority will be to understand how we will be impacted by changing financial and environmental scenarios and work with key stakeholders to define the service delivery models that will enable us to keep meeting emergency response needs. Clear communication will also be critical to ensure that our partners, communities, and volunteers understand and value our role as a professional and highly skilled emergency response agency. We will also actively seek to influence our government and sector partners to support sustainable funding and service delivery.

We will know we have succeeded when

- we are sustaining high performance in our core response services
- we can withstand challenging financial and environmental situations
- our communities are confident that our services are meeting their needs

Outcome 3

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

We are an inclusive organisation that supports volunteers and staff to maximise their impact, which is fundamental to our culture. Our people are critical to our future success and we will build an organisation that is safe, and has a progressive culture that represents the diversity of us all.

Over the coming four years we will continue to prioritise our roadmap to develop a progressive and diverse culture and that also strengthens the physical and psychosocial safety of our people. We know that members of the

community are keen to volunteer when an emergency weather event occurs, but we need to make sure we have a sustainable and supported pipeline of volunteers that can be mobilised 365 days a year. We will also focus on enabling 'effective systems' to improve the experience and minimise unnecessary work for volunteers and staff without compromising service delivery, good governance, and safety.

We will know we have succeeded when

- our volunteer base reflects the diversity of their communities
- our volunteers and staff are satisfied that their work is fulfilling and impactful
- we have reduced numbers of critical safety incidents in the workplace
- our volunteers and staff are confident that the systems they use enhance their efficiency and effectiveness

Outcome 2

We connect better to communities, enhancing their preparedness for emergency weather events

We know that maintaining connections with communities before, during, and after an emergency is integral to achieving our vision of safer communities together. As community-based organisations, VICSES units have a critical role to play in helping their communities have an increased understanding of their risks and how to manage them. In turn this will reduce the pressure on our units and the scale of emergency response required.

To deliver this outcome we will build on the strength of our existing community engagement networks to utilise a research and evidence-based approach to community preparedness, which will set us and our communities up for success. Increasing community preparedness also means continuing to invest in our resilience approaches through programs and resources that reflect and meet the needs of the diverse communities we serve.

We will know we have succeeded when

- our communities are actively engaged with our preparedness materials and activities
- our communities are confident that they have been sufficiently prepared to be involved in an event response

Outcome 4

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

Effective partnerships will enable us to better meet the increasing demand for services in a resource constrained environment. We will help our partners to understand our remit and identify where additional support is required to meet community needs. Partnering with organisations, both within the Victorian Government and externally, will enable us to make the most of mutual opportunities and increase our impact in key challenge areas.

We have committed to being community centred and will enable our volunteers to be our number 1 advocates. We also believe there is work to be done with government and business to determine the most effective ways to release volunteers from other commitments, such as work.

We will know we have succeeded when

- we have healthy partnerships that help balance our available resources to meet community and government service demands
- our volunteers are excited to advocate for our organisation and are able to spend more time volunteering, without costing them the opportunity to work or fulfill other commitments

Implementing our plan

Effective implementation is just as important as having a clear strategic direction. VICSES has established a strategic planning and implementation framework to link our aspirations to our capabilities using a set of defined concepts, processes, and tools.

This framework consists of:

Annual plans to define practical initiatives and projects that will progress the strategic objectives over a 12-month period. A portfolio management approach will support us to identify, scope, resource, and approve initiatives that are strategically aligned and matched to our capacity and capabilities. Annual plans will be executed at unit, region and state level. Thematic action plans will be created where appropriate to group together key programs of work that are cross cutting and that would benefit from a multi-year implementation roadmap.

Clear **project governance, performance monitoring, and reporting** structures will ensure we are following through on the plan and producing the outcomes we aspire to. This is enabled through VICSES governance committees, project steering groups, and dedicated project office.

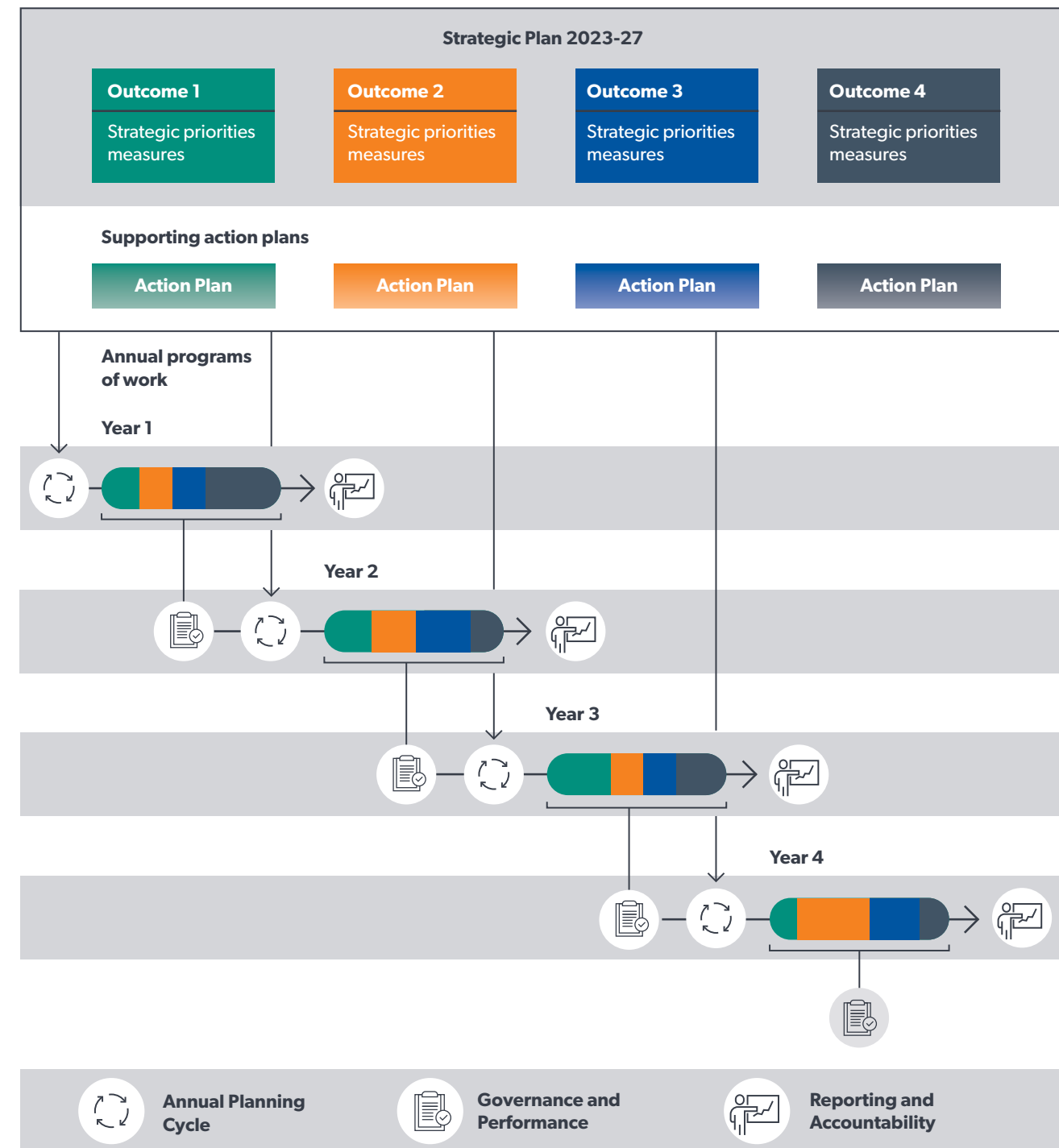
Strategic calibration loop to assess and confirm if strategic priorities are still appropriate or need to be recalibrated due to changes in the operating environment.

This approach allows us to be both deliberate and emergent – defining practical initiatives to implement strategic plan objectives whilst retaining flexibility to manage complexity, take advantage of opportunities, and build resilience against future uncertainty. While we will progress all four outcomes simultaneously, the distribution will vary year on year as a result.



IMPLEMENTATION

Annual plans will be executed at unit, region and state level



How we will measure success

Each of the four strategic outcomes includes key measures to help us gauge the success of our strategic plan implementation. Strategic measures will be broken down into realistic key performance indicators at the initiative level, further linking strategic intent with tactical implementation.

The status of the annual plan program of work will be provided to the Executive Management Team quarterly, along with a report on key measures to the Board, staff, and volunteers bi-annually.

VICSES also reports regularly to government on its performance against its Statement of Expectations and State Budget funded initiatives and publicly through its Annual Report.



MEASURING SUCCESS

Strategic measures will be broken down into realistic key performance indicators at the initiative level

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