Media release

From the Minister for the Environment and Minister for Agriculture

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CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS EXPECTED IN REGIONS THROUGHOUT VICTORIA

The Bracks Government today announced a $14.8 million initiative to support communities across the State to better understand and prepare for the local impacts of climate change.

The initiative is part of the Government's Environmental Sustainability Action Statement, *Our Environment, Our Future*, released today by Premier Steve Bracks.

Environment Minister John Thwaites said major changes to weather patterns were increasingly evident and it was now widely accepted that further climate change is inevitable.

"For Victoria it means we are going to experience drier springs and hotter summers with more severe bushfires and more severe storms."

The initiative will focus on improving the ability of Victoria's built and natural environment to cope with climate change impacts and to increase our understanding of what climate change will mean for individual communities.

For example climate change will impact on bushfire risk around the State, rainfall, biodiversity, local climates, stream flows and the amount of water available in catchments, the snow season and seas level rises.

Agriculture Minister Bob Cameron said the investment was particularly relevant to primary producers.

"This support will help fortify Victoria's agricultural industries against climate change and will ensure farmers are well prepared to cope with increasingly severe weather patterns," he said.

Projected local impacts of climate change include:

South West

- In **Ballarat**, the number of hot days (over 35 °C) could quadruple from the current average of four a year to as many as 17 by 2070.
- In **Horsham**, the number of hot days (over 35 °C) could increase from the current average of 15 a year to as many as 38 by 2070.

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- A 2°C rise in the average temperature and a 15 per cent decrease in rainfall (a moderate scenario for 2070) would make the climate of **Hamilton** more like the current climate of Naracoorte in South Australia.

Global sea levels are expected to rise by between 7-49cm by 2070 which will have an impact on much of Victoria's coastline.

North West

- In **Bendigo**, the number of hot days (over 35°C) could almost quadruple from the current average of nine a year to 34 by 2070 and **bushfire risk** in the area could increase by 20-67 per cent by 2050.
- In **Echuca**, the number of hot days (over 35°C) could triple from the current average of 16 a year to 49 by 2070.
- In **Swan Hill**, the number of hot days (over 35°C) could increase from the current average of 20 a year to as many as 55 by 2070.
- In **Mildura**, the number of **hot days** (over 35°C) could more than double from the current average of 23 a year to 56 by 2070 and **bushfire risk** in the area could increase by 13-35 per cent by 2050.
- **Stream flows in the Murray Darling Basin** could decrease by 12-25 per cent with a 2°C increase in average temperatures.

North East

- In **Wangaratta**, the number of hot days (over 35°C) could almost quadruple from the current average of 15 a year to 56 by 2070.
- **Victoria's alpine areas** that currently have 60 or more days natural snow cover could have between 15-60 per cent less snow cover by 2020, and up to 97 per cent less snow cover by 2050.
- **Stream flows in the Murray Darling Basin** could decrease by 12-25 per cent with a 2°C increase in average temperatures.
- The region's **alpine biodiversity** is particularly vulnerable to climate change impacts

Gippsland

- In **Lakes Entrance**, the number of hot days (over 35°C) could triple from the current average of three a year to nine by 2070.
- In **Sale**, the number of **hot days** (over 35°C) could quadruple from the current average of 4 a year to 16 by 2070 and **bushfire risk** in the area could increase by 16-61 per cent by 2050.
- Global sea levels are expected to rise by between 7-49cm by 2070 which will have an impact on much of **Victoria's coastline**.

Port Phillip

- In **Melbourne,** the number of hot days (over 35°C) could increase from the current average of eight a year to as many as 20 by 2070.
- Bushfire risk in **Laverton** could increase by between 12-44 per cent by 2050.
- **Melbourne's water supply** could decrease by between 7-35 per cent with a 2°C increase in average temperature.

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