

action 3: adapting to the impacts of climate change

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In order to cope with the impacts of climate change we need to adapt – these efforts should complement our activities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to avoid dangerous levels of climate change.

What we will do

We are committing \$14.8 million to prepare Victoria for the impact of climate change through the following four initiatives.

3.1 Adapting for Victoria's future

We will increase our scientific knowledge and technical expertise to help communities adapt to climate change.

Specifically, we will focus on five major issues:

- improving resilience of Victoria's natural assets to cope with more bushfire-risk, coastal erosion, flood control and stormwater infrastructure;
- making Victoria's agricultural systems resilient to climate change;
- making our buildings, infrastructure and homes more adaptable to climate change, such as heat stress;
- understanding what climate change will mean for the health of Victorians, especially the elderly, young and sick; and
- understanding what climate change will mean for individual communities in regions, so they can better prepare.

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3.2 Research centre for climate change adaptation

We will establish a Centre of Research Excellence in climate change adaptation to put a real focus on our research efforts.

This Centre will bring together expertise in social, economic, and biophysical science to work together on research, assessment and provision of multi-disciplinary advice to Government and the community.

The Government will set up the Centre to be consistent with other research efforts, including work being planned at a national level by the Council of Australian Governments. Options for the new Centre will include a virtual centre.

The Centre will vastly increase the Government's capacity to make better informed decisions about the Victoria-specific impacts of climate change, and incorporate adaptation to climate change into strategic planning processes.

The Centre will be complemented by an Adaptation Reference Council, which will work to build capability, advise on research priorities and align research activities in climate change impact assessment and adaptation capacity.

3.3 Local action

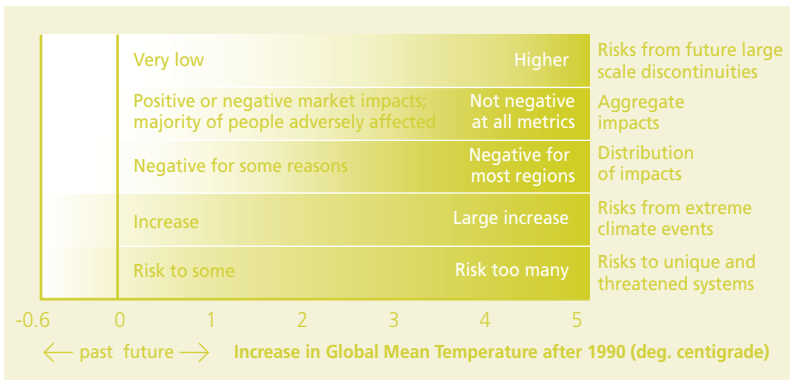
We will update and assess the climate change vulnerabilities of every region in Victoria and keep communities in the picture.

Regional assessments will pull together research across a range of fields to get the full social, environmental and economic impacts of climate change. For instance, water shortages will be assessed not only from the point of view of agricultural impacts, but the flow-on effects to communities, tourism and economic development. This will help Government determine regional land-use issues.

The Government will work with local government, regional groups and other stakeholders to build local understanding, while at the same time, keep communities informed with the most up-to-date, regionally specific information available that will help them develop local solutions.

Additional support will be given through regional government offices to help rural industries and communities take early action, such as developing vegetation corridors to protect natural heritage.

> Impacts of or risks from climate change, by reason for concern



3.4 Human health and climate change

We will assess the potential public health impacts on Victorians arising from climate change, such as heat waves.

We are only beginning to understand the impacts climate change could have on our health. That's why we need to assess the range of implications for our emergency and health care services and identify priority areas for action.

One such priority is responding to heat waves. We will develop a Victorian Heat Wave Emergency Plan, involving communities and local government, to assist emergency planning and responses. Victoria will also host a national conference in the first half of 2007 on climate change and human health.