

# our environment our future

## ***Our Environment Our Future: An Overview***

In the last five years, Victorians have shown they are prepared to work towards making this a sustainable State. We now recycle more than 50 per cent of all our waste; Melburnians are using 22 per cent less water than they did in the 1990s and Victorians are buying more Green Power than any other State.

But we still need to do more, because by world standards Victoria's ecological footprint is huge. If everyone in the world used the same amount of energy and resources as Victorians, we would need four planets to sustain us.

That's why the Bracks Government is taking a major step forward with *Our Environment, Our Future*. This \$200 million action plan will see Victoria join international efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and fight climate change.

*Our Environment, Our Future* will help respond to the challenge of climate change, maintain and restore our natural assets, use our resources more efficiently and reduce our everyday environmental impacts.

There are five key strategies under *Our Environment, Our Future* to help make Victoria a sustainable state. These strategies include:

### **1. Responding to the Challenge of Climate Change**

Climate change is one of the most significant environmental challenges facing the world. Large reductions in greenhouse gas emissions are needed by the middle of this century if we are to avoid dangerous levels of climate change.

\$38 million has been allocated to a range of initiatives that will help Victorian communities reduce their greenhouse emissions and adapt to a changing climate.

Initiatives include:

- Electricity retailers will have to buy 10 per cent of their energy from renewable sources
- Households can better manage their energy use through new 'smart' power meters showing how much electricity they're using every 30-minutes
- Smart Energy Zones will be developed to show how Victoria's homes and businesses can cut greenhouse emissions and costs by generating clean electricity from gas and renewable sources such as solar and wind

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- A new Research Centre for Climate Change will provide research and advice to allow Victorian communities to prepare for local impacts of climate change
- An Emissions Trading Scheme for Australia designed to provide incentive for more efficient energy generation and lower greenhouse emissions
- Victoria's biggest 250 energy and water users must cut waste and be more efficient under new mandatory EPA laws

## 2. Maintaining and Restoring Our Natural Assets

Victoria's rich and diverse natural environments support our lives, communities, industries, jobs and economy.

\$65.5 million has been allocated to a package of initiatives that will help all Victorian communities maintain and restore our natural assets.

Initiatives include:

- Development of *Land Health and Biodiversity White Paper*
- \$21 million for market based schemes that create financial incentives for people to protect land and native vegetation and reduce damage to the environment
- \$6 million to improve water quality and reduce algal blooms in the Gippsland Lakes and ensure the survival of the Gippsland wetlands
- Polluters along the Yarra will be tracked down by a new EPA strike force able to identify the sources and types of pollution entering the river
- New legislation to ensure 18 Victorian heritage rivers, including the Mitchell and Snowy, are protected from damming
- \$8 million to support Landcare and encourage more Victorians to volunteer to protect and restore the environment

## 3. Using Our Resources More Efficiently

By international standards, Victorians use an enormous amount of resources to support our lifestyles. We all have a responsibility to live in a way that has less impact on our environment.

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\$28 million has been allocated to a package of initiatives that will help all Victorian communities use our resources more efficiently.

Initiatives include:

- Legislation to enable a ban on free plastic shopping bags by 2009.
- Twelve new waste recovery centres where Victorians can take their old paints, batteries, computers and other electrical goods to be recycled
- Cuts to levels of hazardous waste will be achieved through increased landfill levies, with revenue from these levies being used to support industry to reuse or avoid these materials
- \$15 million in grants to industry to help businesses be more resource efficient
- \$5 million to improve the health of our forests, including giving trail bikers and four wheel drivers upgraded tracks and improved signs, but stopping them from accessing fragile areas

#### **4. Reducing Our Everyday Impacts**

Everyone has an impact on the environment and everyone has a responsibility to reduce that impact. We can all contribute by taking a few simple actions.

\$60 million has been allocated to a package of initiatives that will help Victorian communities change their behaviour and reduce their everyday impacts.

Initiatives include:

- \$4.2 million for a statewide roll out of GreenHome – a hands-on program where Victorians are shown in their own home how to save water and energy and reduce waste
- \$7.4 million for a media education campaign to help Victorians live more sustainably
- Rebates to encourage consumers to replace old refrigerators, heating and cooling with 5 Star alternatives
- \$5.9 million to help Victorians to live more sustainably through community grants, incentives and local programs
- \$10 million for a National Centre for Sustainability, Environmental Design and Land Management at Swinburne TAFE, Wantirna Campus

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- Training and accreditation to bring more tradespeople and professionals up to speed with sustainable practices

## 5. Government Leadership

Government has an important role in delivering a more sustainable future through leading by example and ensuring that sustainability goals inform planning, decision-making and operations.

\$14 million has been allocated to a package of initiatives to demonstrate the Government's commitment to being sustainable in its own operations.

Initiatives include:

- Purchase of 150 hybrid cars for the Government car fleet
- Use of ethanol by the Government car fleet where available
- \$4 million to upgrade all public housing with AAA shower heads and dual flush toilets within five years
- Government will reuse or recycle all computers and support suppliers who take back their products
- All new Government office buildings will achieve 5 star environmental rating
- Government departments will be required to develop a Sustainability Action Plan to cover all policy and operations
- \$7.2 million to upgrade hospitals and aged care facilities to be energy and water smart