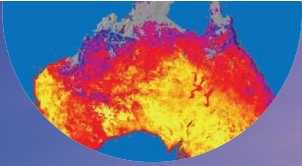


# Scoping climate change impacts on population health and vulnerabilities



## The climate is changing in Victoria

Lower rainfall, higher temperatures and more extreme weather events have become a reality affecting the health and wellbeing of Victorians.

The March 2009 *Climate Change: Global Risks, Challenges and Decisions Congress* in Copenhagen confirmed that the worst case Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) scenario trajectories from 1990 are now being realised or exceeded<sup>1</sup>. In Victoria the CSIRO and Bureau of Meteorology have projected this will lead to an average temperature change of 0.8°C by 2030 and 1.4°C by 2070.<sup>2</sup>

As the government department responsible for planning, funding and delivering health, community and housing services, the Department of Human Services (DHS) needs to anticipate the health consequences of our changing environment and identify vulnerable individuals who will be most affected.

## Understanding the impacts of climate change

DHS is currently working with Arup, the National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health, Curtin University and Buchan Consulting to develop a methodology to identify future health impacts and vulnerabilities.

Understanding how climate change affects health and wellbeing will better enable DHS, other government departments, agencies and community organisations to adapt their services and policies to the needs of Victorian communities.

<sup>1</sup> [http://climatecongress.ku.dk/newsroom/congress\\_key\\_messages/](http://climatecongress.ku.dk/newsroom/congress_key_messages/)

<sup>2</sup> [www.climatechange.vic.gov.au](http://www.climatechange.vic.gov.au)

## Working with other organisations

Knowledge and data about climate change exists within many organisations.

To create a methodology to accurately identify the impacts of climate change, the project team is seeking to integrate existing knowledge and data from within the DHS and other government agencies and statutory authorities actively researching and monitoring climate change and/or its impacts.

A Stakeholder Reference Group of government agencies and statutory authorities undertaking complementary projects or research has been established to assist knowledge transfer. Initial exploratory meetings are being conducted with each of the agencies identified below and the DHS is in the process of considering the engagement of further government agencies identified through these discussions.

### Stakeholder Reference Group

- Department of Human Services
- Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development
- Department of Planning and Community Development
- Department of Primary Industries
- Department of Sustainability and Environment
- Department of Transport
- Environment Protection Authority
- VicHealth

## The Impact Assessment

Once finalised, the methodology will be implemented to generate a detailed assessment of the climate change impacts on health and vulnerabilities.

### Potential health impacts

The impact of climate change, including extreme weather events such as bushfires and floods, may cause or exacerbate existing health issues, related to:

- Threats to water supply, safety and security
- Threats to food safety and security
- Loss of shelter, homes and community facilities
- Poor air quality from pollutants and aeroallergens and associated illness
- Mental illness
- An increase in water borne disease and other infectious diseases
- Ultraviolet radiation
- Personal loss and death of family and friends.

In order to adapt to the health and social impacts of climate change the DHS needs to understand the potential impacts and develop policies and processes to respond and protect our most vulnerable individuals and communities.



### How to find out more

The Project Team is available to discuss the project in more detail or provide a presentation about the project to organisations and working groups.

If you are interested in arranging a presentation please contact the Project Team.

### Can you help?

The Project Team is keen to hear from individuals and organisations that have been, or are involved in:

- Capturing data related to the impacts of climate change, and/or
- Researching the impacts of climate change which may affect human health.

Please contact the Project Team.

### Project Team Contact

Thomas Mitchell  
 Environmental Health Unit  
 Department of Human Services  
 Phone: 03 9096 5279  
 Email: [Thomas.Mitchell@dhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:Thomas.Mitchell@dhs.vic.gov.au)

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