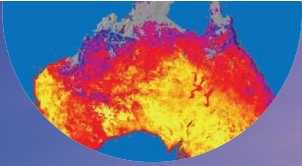


Scoping climate change impacts on population health and vulnerabilities



What's been happening?

Since the first update of the Scoping Climate Change Impacts on Population Health and Vulnerabilities project, a great deal has happened including:

- exploration of existing relationships between climate change, health, vulnerabilities and equity,
- development of a draft methodology, and
- a workshop which brought together more than 60 stakeholders from over 26 different organisations.

The project revisited

The changing climate in Victoria is likely to result in negative health impacts for some individuals and communities.

Through this project, a methodology is being created to identify future health impacts and the vulnerabilities of individuals and communities resulting from climate change.

Once implemented (expected 2010) the findings will assist the Department of Human Services and other government departments, agencies and community organisations to adapt their services and policies to the needs of Victorian communities.

Six-step methodology summary diagram

Step 1:

Review latest climate change projections to 2030 and 2070.

Step 2:

Define a community baseline of existing health and vulnerability characteristic.

Step 3:

Identify potential health impacts on population health.

Step 4:

Identify vulnerable groups of individuals within communities.

Step 5:

Determine the level of vulnerability and the adaptive capacity of each group.

Step 6:

Prioritise adaptation actions to assist in the development of policy responses.

Exploring existing relationships

The months of April and May were spent scouring existing literature to articulate the known relationships between climate change, health and vulnerability and equity.

The research also identified gaps in knowledge and literature which need to be filled, and resulted in a benchmarking report which helped shape the draft methodology.

Drafting the methodology

June and July were spent developing a six-step draft methodology (refer diagram) which seeks to:

- provide academic robustness,
- be contemporaneous in reflecting both knowledge (primary research) and in applied understanding (tools, models and approaches), and
- be practical, achievable and costs effective.

When drafting the methodology the Project Team noted challenges which would best be resolved with input from other stakeholders.

The draft methodology and issues were set out in a Discussion Paper (available by contacting the Project Team) and discussed with stakeholders at a dedicated workshop on 29 July 2009.



A workshop with 60 stakeholders

A key element in the design of the methodology was to capture the views of leading practitioners within the fields of climate change, health, vulnerability and equity, data and policy framework development.

To this end Chief Health Officer Dr John Carnie hosted a workshop which brought together more than 60 stakeholders representing 21 different government departments, agencies and community organisations to share knowledge and expertise and provide their views on the draft methodology.

The workshop participants shared views on the level of detail needed in the methodology which in theory could range from a state-wide assessment right down to an assessment for each local government area.

In developing the methodology, a key challenge is finding an approach which results in a level of detail that enables meaningful policy development and can be implemented in a practical timeframe.

The workshop participants also contributed through Working Group discussions. Depending on their expertise, each participant was allocated to a Working Group focused on one step of the methodology. Each group discussed specific issues or challenges which had been pre-identified.

In addition, a number of other observations were shared throughout the day. The group discussed concerns that the latest observations of climate changes are more dramatic than the worst-case scenarios projected by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. The challenge in identifying the most vulnerable groups was discussed extensively, along with the need for meaningful and innovative stakeholder engagement.

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Next steps

The Project Team is now reviewing all of the information captured from the workshop and using it to enhance the draft methodology.

The draft methodology will be reviewed in October – November 2009 prior to finalisation.

Can you help?

If you 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, and would like to assist please contact the Project Team.

Workshop participants

- City of Greater Dandenong
- Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
- Department of Human Services
- Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development
- Department of Transport
- Department of Planning and Community Development
- Department of Primary Industries
- Department of Sustainability and Environment
- EPA Victoria
- McCaughey Centre
- Monash University
- Municipal Association of Victoria
- North Yarra Community Health
- Office of Climate Change (DPC)
- Office of the Emergency Services Commissioner (DoJ)
- South East Healthy Communities Partnership
- Western District Health Service
- Victorian Council of Social Service
- VicHealth
- Victorian Police
- Western Port Greenhouse Alliance

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