Victorian Adaptation Responses to Climate Change and Human Health

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Victorian projections and impacts

- More frequent and intense bush-fires
- Warming climate
- Inundation/sea level changes
- Adverse/extreme weather events
- Drying, increasing drought conditions
- Heat-related illness and mortality
- Injury and mortality from bush-fires and extreme weather events
- Increased food and water-borne illness
- Mental and stress-related illness
- Social and economic impacts
Victorian Government – health and human services

- Public hospital system
- Community health program
- State aged care program (in-home and residential care)
- Mental health and drug services programs
- Public health program
- Ambulance Service Victoria

- Disability residential services
- Public housing and related services
- Concessions program
- Emergency management response
- Youth Justice
- Child protection
- Home and residential care for children
A brief background...

“We will assess the potential public health impacts on Victorians arising from climate change, such as heat waves ... and identify priority areas for action”
The framework and strategies for adaptation

The Ottawa Charter
• Build healthy public policy
• Create supportive environments
• Strengthen community actions
• Develop personal skills
• Reorient health services
• Moving into the future

Victorian Strategies
• Policy
• Prediction (detection) and preventive control measures
• Service enhancement
• Consistency
• Integrated planning
• Planning and practice tools
• Data and evidence
Victoria January 2009

4 day period from the 27/1 to the 30/1 with 3 days of temperatures in extreme range.

Followed by a further extreme spike on 7/2/09 with subsequent catastrophic impacts associated with Black Saturday.
Mortality

All deaths* between 26 Jan and 1 Feb
Expected (mean of 2004-08) vs. Observed (2009)

Total all cause mortality is 374 excess deaths (above expected)
Impacts of 2009 Heatwave

- **Ambulance Victoria (metropolitan) increases:**
  - total emergency cases, heat-related conditions and cardiac arrest cases

- **Locum GP attendances:**
  - direct heat-related conditions and deceased persons

- **Emergency Department presentations:**
  - Overall presentations, more acutely ill patients, heat-related conditions and deceased patients
Action at local government level

- Opportunities for integrated planning
- Identification of vulnerable communities
- Enhancement of existing services
- Planning and practice tools
- Data and evidence
Statewide Heatwave Plan

- Improved collaborations
- Funding for local heatwave planning
- Expanded and improved heat health warning systems
- Enhancement of services
- Targeted delivery of consistent community messages
- Service support – PAV, Keeping in Touch, Community Register
Resources

Staying healthy in the heat

- Keep cool
- Drink plenty of water
- Stay out of the sun
- Look after yourself and others

For more information, visit: www.health.vic.gov.au/environment/heatwave

Climate change and health
A guide to relevant resources for planning

Atmospheric
- New methods in atmospheric chemistry
- Air pollution
- Climate change
- Greenhouse gases
- Ozone depletion

For more information, visit: www.enviro.vic.gov.au/climate

A Victorian Government Initiative
Other initiatives

- Enhanced and new community registers
- Grants to support frail people, older people and those with disabilities to develop personal emergency plans.
- Keeping in Touch program for older public housing tenants
- Broader agency agreement on public health messaging
- Stronger emergency management arrangements
Proposed next steps

• Evaluation and review of Victoria’s heatwave framework and components
• Education and awareness for Health service professionals
• On-going knowledge development
• Address the many challenges
  – Management extreme fire and heat messages
  – Effective regional responses
  – Uneven impacts on health - regions, communities, demographic sub-groups