



# Climate Resilient Communities OF THE BARWON SOUTH WEST

## Councils and partners working together

The Climate Resilient Communities of the Barwon South West project is a joint collaboration between 10 local governments, the Victorian Department of Environment and Primary Industries and a range of statutory agency partners. The project aims to help communities throughout the Barwon South West region understand what risks or opportunities might be presented by future extreme weather events.

For further details about this project, please refer to Fact Sheet 1.

## Project Delivery

The Project is being delivered through two phases.

**Phase One :** Understanding climate risks to the Region and identification of priority actions. This phase has now been completed and was delivered through the four key steps listed below.

**Phase Two:** Deliver priority projects to manage the risks identified in Phase One.

### 1. Climate vulnerability assessment

The Region's vulnerability was evaluated through an assessment of exposure to future climatic conditions in 2030 and 2070 (and 2100 for sea level rise), sensitivity and adaptive capacity.

**Findings in the report found that, overall the region is getting warmer and drier, there is risk of:**

- An increase in extreme heat days
- An increase in sea level
- An increase in the frequency of intense precipitation events.

**It was identified that the greatest sensitivities to change exist for:**

- Populations of the major regional town centres of Colac, Hamilton, Warrnambool and the suburbs of northern Geelong.
- Primary industries within the Colac Otway, Golden Plains and Surf Coast Shires as well as the energy and water demanding industrial activities of the City of Greater Geelong.
- The natural environs of the Glenelg, Golden Plains, Southern Grampians, Corangamite and Colac Otway Shires.
- The coastline including the townships of Barwon Heads, Apollo Bay, Port Campbell, Geelong, Portland, Port Fairy, Queenscliff, Torquay and Warrnambool.

### 2. Planning and action review

An assessment of each council's current adaptive capacity was undertaken to give an overall picture for the region. This was achieved through a better practice comparison and a range of surveys with council staff.



From this assessment it was found that the level of preparedness for climate change risks and impacts varied considerably across the region. Compliance with regulations was very high, whereas risk identification and assessment was the weakest area across the board.

### 3. Strategic discussions

Workshops were held with more than 120 staff from across each of the ten councils and nine partner agencies to explore the impacts of extreme climate events in their area and identify key risks to their operations.

During the municipal strategic discussions the councils and partners identified 150 potential climate risks spanning economic, social and environmental spheres.

### 4. Regional report

A regional report of Phase One has been completed. The Report provides a snapshot of climate risks and opportunities, preparedness and adaptation priorities for the region.

## Key themes

Phase One identified risk areas and focus themes for further investigation during Phase Two of the project. Specific projects have not been identified but will be developed in the early stage of Phase Two, to address the report's focus themes:

- Assets and services – Council and organisation
- Economic impacts of changes to extreme events
- Agriculture
- Community health and wellbeing
- Infrastructure
- Bushfire
- Information gaps/ barriers.

## Where to next?

From Phase One we have generated a list of key risks to councils' operations, brought about from extreme weather events.

Our next steps are to select the regional projects that will mitigate these risks and start to scope them in detail.

This process is expected to take several months, starting with a project group meeting with councils and partners. From there we will provide further opportunities for councils and partners to comment on the proposed project, with an aim to finalise them by the end April 2014.

**The Regional Report contains a range of recommendations to manage the identified risk themes, including:**

- Analysis of extreme events – costs, impacts, stress tests and a regional case study
- Great Ocean Road and other key roads – identify hotspots (ie flooding, sea level rises) and prepare response plan
- Each council to complete asset risk register and adaptation plan
- Training in use of SimClim to build internal capacity
- Additional mapping products to understand the extent of sensitive agricultural practices
- Sectoral studies (consider impacts and opportunities)
  - Agriculture
  - Tourism
  - Environment
  - Coastal Management

## How can I get involved?

Further updates on opportunities to get involved will follow over the months ahead.

In the meantime, for more information or to register your interest in the project, contact:

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