

Primary Production Adaptation Action Plan 2027–31

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VICTORIA
Australia

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Acknowledgement of Country



We proudly acknowledge Victoria's First Nations peoples and their ongoing strength in practising the world's oldest living culture. We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the lands and waters on which we live and work, and pay our respect to their Elders past and present.

Victoria's Aboriginal communities continue to strengthen and grow with the ongoing practice of language, lore and cultural knowledge. We recognise the contribution of Aboriginal people and communities to Victorian life. Traditional Owners have managed Victoria's land and water for tens of thousands of years and they have deep knowledge and cultural practices in sustainable food and medicinal plant production and ecological land management. We acknowledge their history and their living cultural traditions.

Victoria's Treaty process with First Peoples recognised Aboriginal sovereignty, strengthens culture and advances reconciliation. Self-determination is the central principle underpinning the Victorian Government's partnership with Traditional Owners and has been formalised through the passage of the *Statewide Treaty Act 2025*, which received Royal Assent in November 2025.

As part of this process, a permanent independent body, Gellung Warl, has been established to support shared decision-making and enable systemic change across government institutions and policy frameworks. Embedding Traditional Owner knowledge and land management practices within Victoria's primary production system will help build resilience to climate change while supporting Treaty aspirations.

Victoria is committed to building our resilience to climate change

The Victorian Government has some of the most ambitious emissions reduction targets in the world and while actions to reduce emissions continue, the Victorian Government is also focussed on improving the management of climate change related risks and building the state's climate resilience to the unavoidable impacts that are locked in.

These efforts are anchored in the *Climate Action Act 2017*, with five-yearly updates to climate science knowledge and adaptation planning for statewide systems.

Victoria's first system-based adaptation action plans were released in 2022. The *Primary Production Adaptation Action Plan 2022-26* supported wide-ranging actions to help the agriculture, plantation forestry and fisheries sectors to prepare for, adapt to, and thrive under a changing climate.

Building on these foundations, *Victoria's Climate Change Strategy 2026-30* identifies adaptation priorities that inform this *Primary Production Adaptation Action Plan 2022-26*.

Helping households with the cost of living and lowering costs for business

- Focus on the most at-risk individuals and communities and support them to reduce their vulnerability and exposure to climate impacts
- Provide information and advice to households and communities to manage climate risks and seize opportunities

Putting jobs and workers first in the transition

- Focus on the most at-risk critical industry sectors and workforces and support them to reduce their vulnerability and exposure to climate impacts
- Provide information and advice to industries and businesses to manage climate risks and seize opportunities to build a climate resilient economy

Building for the future

- Focus on the most at-risk assets and services and implement risk mitigation strategies, including feasible opportunities to build back better or support managed transition
- Ensure planning, design, location and procurement standards for new assets and services seek to minimise climate risks

Protecting kids, families and communities

- Support emergency management and preparedness for more frequent and intense climate-related events
- Focus on climate-related risks to Victoria's natural environment and implement strategies to maximise biodiversity conservation and support ecosystem services
- Support nature-based solutions that connect Victorians to the natural environment, reduce emissions and build climate resilience

Figure 1 Climate Change Strategy 2026-30 identifies priorities

The 2027-31 plan is underpinned by our commitment to support self-determination for Traditional Owners to care for Country and culture in a changing climate, and to benefit from the transition. We acknowledge Statewide Treaty and the establishment of the First Peoples Assembly of Gellung Warl as the democratically elected representative body for First Peoples in Victoria and will engage with the Assembly in the finalisation of this plan.

Building resilience requires different types of adaptation action

Adaptation is a process of adjusting to the actual or expected effects of climate change.

Adaptation action can take many different forms. While direct action to reduce risks, such as upgrading infrastructure to withstand the impacts of extreme events, is essential, it requires a solid foundation of enabling actions to target effort and create sustained change. For instance, ensuring changing climate and adaptation is embedded in decision making processes, and engaging with and learning from others, to inform direct action.

The Victorian Government is implementing the priorities of the *Climate Change Strategy 2026-30* by committing to adaptation actions that:

- Ensure climate change is considered in decision-making processes and operations, and that practitioners across government have the knowledge and skills to act
- Use the latest climate science to understand risks and opportunities, draw on the lived experience of communities, and use structured risk assessments to identify adaptation options and priorities
- Support others to adapt by providing information, resources and training, while working with other jurisdictions and the private sector so everyone plays their part
- Directly reduce risks to those Victorians who are most vulnerable, to Victoria's public assets and services, and to Victoria's natural environment, including by preparing for and recovering from emergencies.



Figure 2 Types of adaptation

The primary production system is important to the state's economy and food security

System scope

The primary production system incorporates agriculture, plantation forestry, productive fisheries and the infrastructure, workforce and communities supporting them. It covers the full value chain, comprising key inputs, growth and harvest, production and processing.

Victoria's primary production system is a major contributor to the state's economy, with the value of Victorian food and fibre production worth more than \$20 billion. Victoria has Australia's largest agriculture workforce, accounting for more than 25% of the national total. More than 75% of agriculture production jobs are located in regional Victoria.

Primary production operates as a highly interconnected socio-ecological system, where industries and communities work on Country and are deeply interdependent. It relies on access to water, land, transport, energy, education and a healthy workforce. When any of these elements is disrupted, the impacts flow quickly through to producers, the environment, local communities and the broader economy.



Figure 3 Components of the primary production system

Roles and responsibilities

The Victorian Government supports primary industries through policy and legislation, biosecurity systems, emergency management and recovery arrangements, adaptation guidance, research investment, coordinated national action and access to independent climate advice.

Primary industry bodies, businesses and individuals also play a strong role by using their skills, expertise and networks to strengthen resilience and support adaptation. They adjust practices and decisions as conditions change, working collaboratively, supporting research and innovation, advocating for effective adaptation policy, and seeking and providing independent advice.

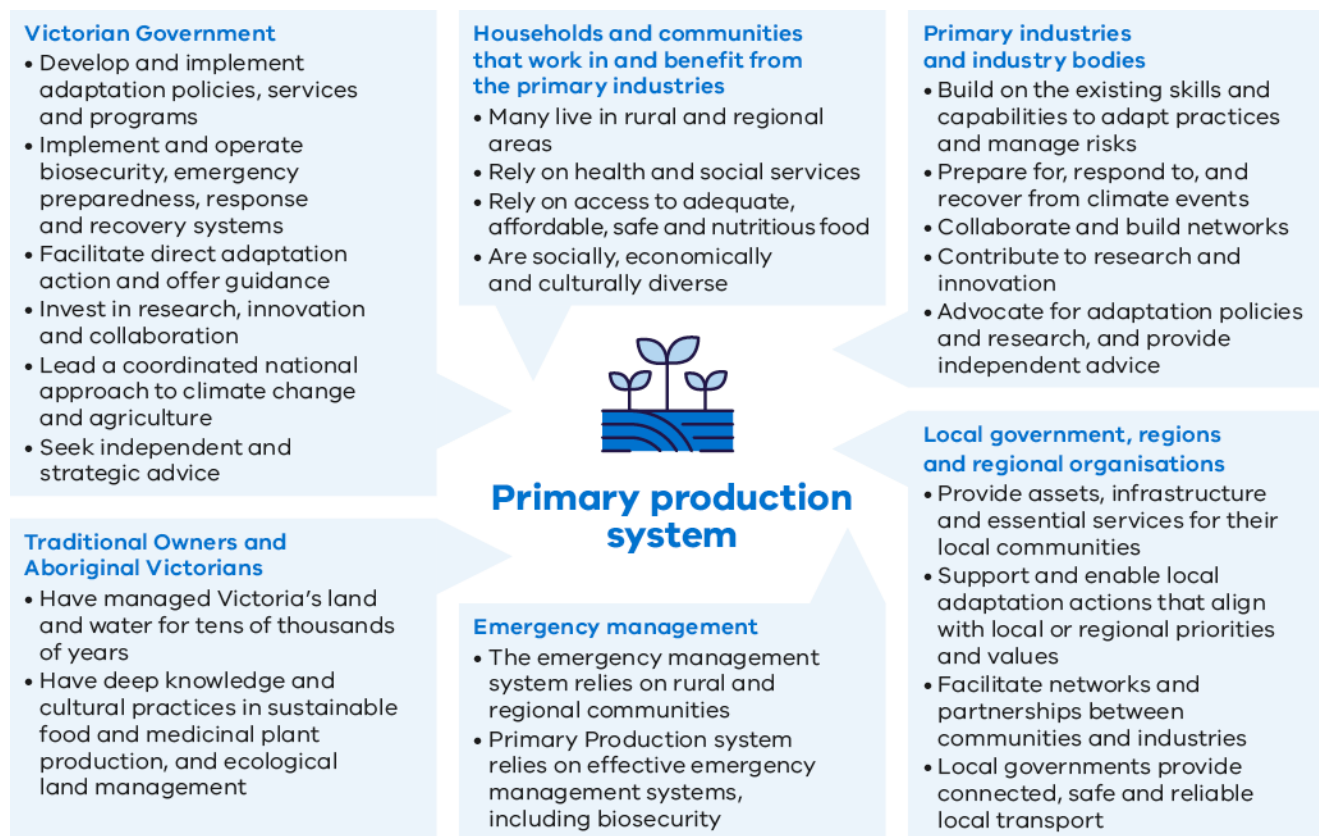


Figure 4 Roles and responsibilities in the primary production system

Climate change brings risks and opportunities

Victoria's climate has become warmer and drier, and we are experiencing more frequent and intense climate hazards. As the climate continues to warm, these climate hazards will continue to change.

These changes pose significant risks to individuals, communities, ecosystems, industries and infrastructure.

Climate change presents both risks and opportunities for Victoria's primary production system

Climate change is intensifying production challenges across the primary production system. Producers, more than ever, need to prepare and plan for cascading and concurrent climate change impacts. These include shifts in rainfall patterns, higher temperatures, greater seasonal variability, changed harvest periods and more frequent extreme events like fires, droughts and floods.

These changes are affecting human and animal wellbeing and undermining the long-term productivity and profitability of primary producers the communities and economies that depend on them. More frequent extreme events also increase requests for support from the community and government, further straining the emergency management system and the workforce that supports it.

Victoria's climate has already changed. Observed as of 2024:

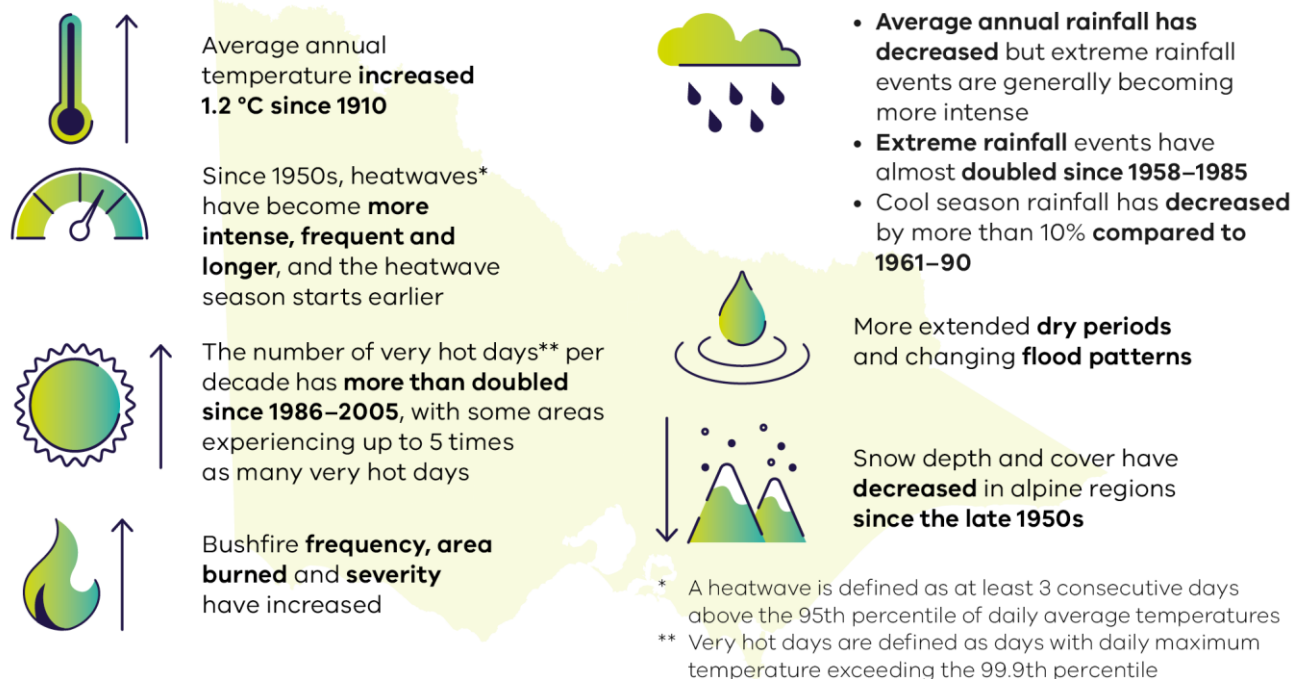


Figure 5 Climate change in Victoria

Climate impacts extend well beyond the farm gate. Combined with non-climatic risks, these impacts extend across supply chains, infrastructure, transport, workforce, natural resources and communities, requiring coordinated action across other Victorian Government's adaptation action plans – not just the primary production system.

A changing climate is also creating opportunities for new approaches. Improved data and modelling are supporting new technologies, climate-resilient infrastructure and nature-based solutions. Combined with Victoria's strong agricultural and forestry base, this positions the state to diversify production and develop new markets.

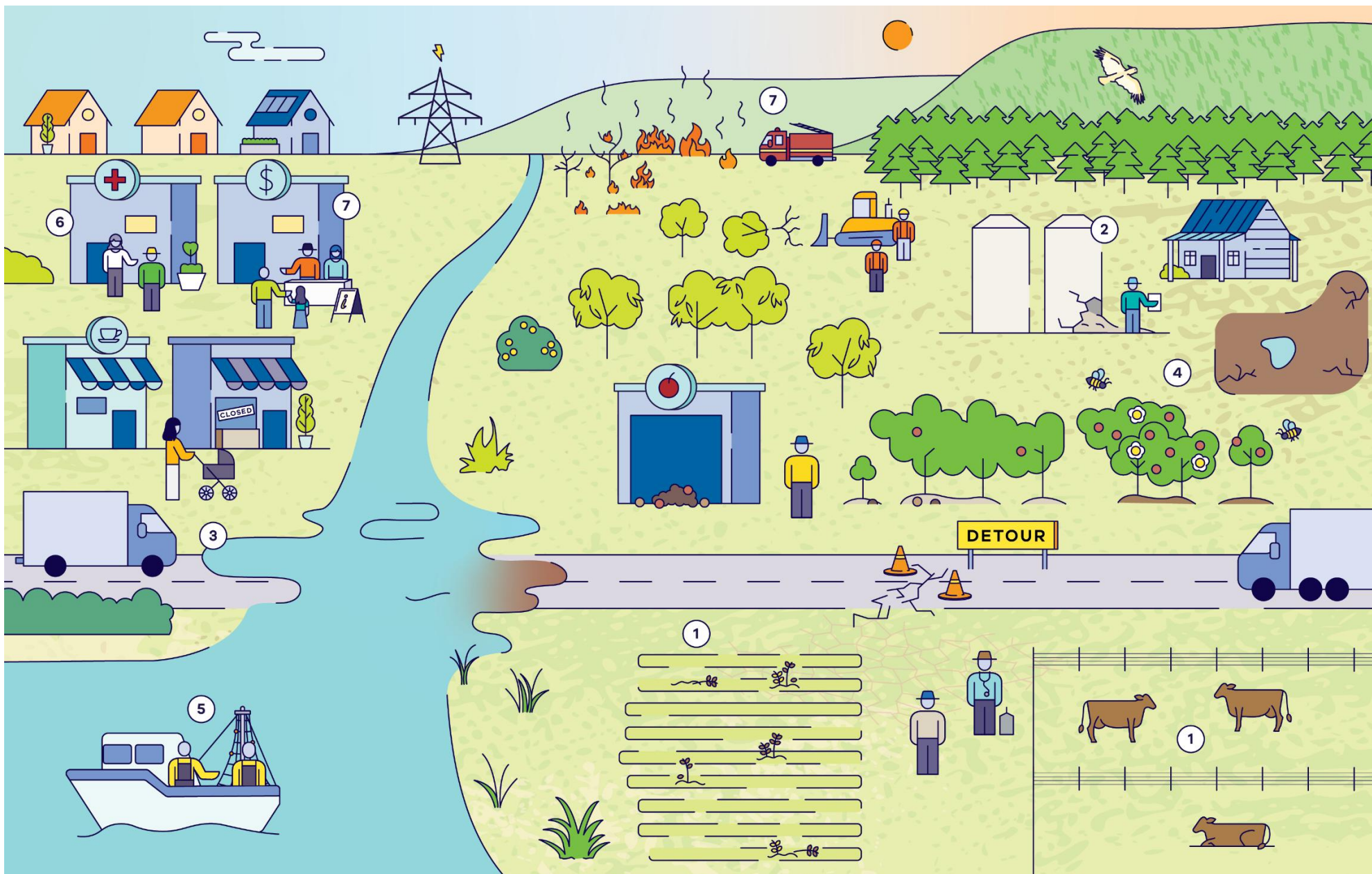


Figure 6 Key climate risks facing the primary production system

Risk

- 1 Pest and disease outbreaks are more challenging to manage, due to new or shifting pest and disease outbreaks caused by extreme weather events and a changing climate.
- 2 Primary producers face higher maintenance and asset management costs, due to disruptions to business operations, damage to equipment and on-farm infrastructure and more challenging crop and livestock management, including animal welfare issues, caused by extreme weather events and a changing climate.
- 3 Primary producers experience reduced access to inputs, products, processors and markets to effectively run their business, due to supply chain disruptions and damage, including to off-farm infrastructure, from extreme weather events and a changing climate.
- 4 Primary producers experience increasing pressure to maintain and increase productivity of crops, livestock and horticulture due to declining water availability.
- 5 Primary producers experience increasing pressure to maintain and increase productivity of crops, livestock and horticulture due to reduced soil health and a decrease in pollinators caused by a changing climate.
- 6 Some crops, livestock and fish stocks experience loss or reduction of growth due to changing growing conditions and habitat suitability caused by a changing climate.
- 7 The ability to attract and retain skilled workers and maintain social structures is reduced due to climate impacts on physical and mental health and wellbeing of primary production workforces and communities.
- 8 Climate adaptation and emergency recovery are more challenging across the sector due to increased insurance costs, reduced insurance availability, and reduced capacity to secure capital for investment in resilience-building initiatives.

Opportunity

- A Greater diversification of primary production systems as change in growing conditions support shifts in some species, practices and operating models, creating new opportunities in domestic and export markets.
- B Increased productivity and competitiveness through improved data, modelling and technology, enabling producers to make more informed decisions and adopt climate-responsive and sustainable practices earlier.
- C Strengthened business resilience through a managed transition to more productive, sustainable and climate-ready production systems, enabled by innovation in technology and the development of crops and livestock adapted to future climates.
- D Enhanced collaboration, peer learning and community cohesion as producers, industries and regions work together to plan for and implement adaptation responses.
- E Improved access to critical inputs like fuel and fertiliser during climate-related and other disruptions by working with the Commonwealth, industry and logistics partners.

Our current adaptation action

Focus on critical industry sectors and workforces

The Victorian Government support the primary production system through a range of initiatives spanning infrastructure, workforce capabilities and regional communities. This includes strengthening the tools and data that underpin farmer decision-making and delivering targeted, region-specific training to increase uptake and adoption of adaptation measures.

The government undertakes targeted research in partnership with universities, industry and community groups, and disseminates findings through communities of practice, public forums and webinars, as well as through applied, on-farm trials at its **SmartFarms**.

The government also partners with primary industries through programs focused on drought and seasonal support, biosecurity and emergency animal disease preparedness, and farm and community resilience. This support spans all phases of emergency management, including preparedness, response and recovery for events such as flooding, fire and biosecurity incursions.

People are at the centre of the sector, which is why the Victorian Government supports primary industry workers to manage climate impacts by strengthening safety, health and wellbeing across Victoria's primary industries.

The **Farming Safe and Well Program** improves on-farm safety culture, supports mental health services, and partners with organisations such as the National Centre for Farmer Health. This work reflects the growing risks to outdoor workers from rising temperatures and more frequent extreme weather events which is increasingly affecting labour productivity and wellbeing.

Minimal irrigation thresholds for stone fruit, pear and almond trees

This research is investigating the minimum irrigation levels required to support tree survival and return to productivity during dry periods. It is also assessing, tree management strategies, including how existing tools and technologies can be used to help trees survive when irrigation water is limited. The research is being delivered in partnership with the University of Melbourne, Federation University and Fruit Growers Victoria, with support from the Almond Board of Australia, Apple and Pear Australia Limited, and the Mallee Regional Innovation Centre.

Support nature-based solutions

The Victorian **Trees on Farms Program** supports rural landowners to integrate trees into farming systems, improving both climate resilience and farm productivity.

Benefits include improved soil health, reduced erosion, enhanced water quality and better livestock shelter, alongside opportunities for income diversification, with appropriately scaled plantings able to generate carbon credits and support participation in emerging environmental markets.

Complementing this, the **Trees on Farms Incubator Program** offers in-depth training and tailored planning support to help farmers adopt smarter farming practices, delivering conservation and ecosystem benefits, while strengthening landscape resilience.

A focus on at-risk communities and industries

The Victorian Government prioritises support for farming communities and industries most exposed to climate risk, particularly drought, to reduce vulnerability and manage long-term impacts across the primary production system. Support for drought preparedness and response is delivered through the **Future Drought Fund** and the development of **Regional Drought Resilience Plans**. These community-led plans focus on risk management and

building long-term resilience in local farming communities.

Farm business capability is strengthened through targeted programs such as the **Farm Business Resilience Program**, which delivers workshops and training courses to build on farmers' skills. Participating businesses improve their technical, strategic and financial preparedness, enabling them to manage drought and climate change impacts, sustain productivity and, where necessary, build back better or make informed transition decisions.

In parallel, the Government works closely with industry and supply chain partners to address systemic climate risks. This is delivered through broad industry networks such as the Agriculture Industry Reference Group and the Horticulture Industry Network, as well as commodity-specific forums like the Dairy Industry Leadership Group, BetterBeef, BestWool/BestLamb, and forestry and cropping groups. These networks enable coordinated planning and response by identifying and managing emerging climate risks to critical assets and services, including transport, energy, water, and human and animal health, reducing exposure and strengthening resilience across interconnected industries and communities.

Government's Drought Support Program

A south-west Victorian mixed livestock producer strengthened drought resilience with support from the Victorian Government Farm Drought Support Grant, upgrading a stock containment area with a reticulated water system to improve water efficiency and animal management. This investment supports both immediate drought response and longer-term climate adaptation by enabling more controlled feeding and reduced pasture pressure.

With support from Agriculture Victoria's Farm Advisory Service, the producer developed a whole-of-business drought plan, while participation in a Best Wool Best Lamb network built practical skills and confidence to manage increasing climate variability and future drought risk.

We are committed to further action

Climate change is increasing operational, environmental, biosecurity, supply chain and social risks across the primary production system, with potential for significant cascading economic impacts. There is deep uncertainty about how climate risks will evolve, and the potential for other emerging and compounding risks. At the same time, these pressures drive opportunities to strengthen climate adaptation and support transition to climate-adapted systems, lifting productivity and profitability, growing regional jobs, supporting local supply chains, strengthening workforce wellbeing and building sovereign capability over the long term.

Over the next five years, the Victorian Government will take further action to build the climate resilience of Victoria's primary production system. This Plan outlines four priority areas that, in collaboration with industry, aim to drive strategic research and build readiness for long-term transitions, embed climate resilience in decision-making and emergency management, and support First Peoples' self-determination.

Action 1: Drive strategic adaptation research and science, co-designed and delivered in partnership with industry, to enable long term climate adaptation and transition

Adaptation type:



Led by Agriculture Victoria with Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action and Department of Education

The primary production system and the climate risks it faces are changing rapidly. Strategic, targeted research is essential to inform practice change, build knowledge and accelerate technological advancement. This will support the sector's transition to climate-smart business models that sustain and enhance productivity and profitability.

This action aims to:

- partner with industry to deliver applied climate, social and economic research that improves production outcomes, enables technological advancement, and supports safer, more productive practices in response to climate change

- translate research into practical adaptation and transition solutions that strengthen long-term resilience across the primary production system.

By delivering adaptation-focused research outputs - including climate-smart production systems, decision-ready tools, and improved crop and livestock performance under future conditions - the primary production system will be better positioned to maintain and enhance productivity and profitability as climate risks evolve. This action will also provide robust evidence-based guidance to inform future government investment decisions in the sector.

This action will be supported by established partnerships between government, universities and industry. For example,

Adaptation types

	Take direct action to reduce risks
	Enable and encourage others to adapt
	Understand the risks, opportunities, and actions
	Embed climate change in Victorian Government decision-making and operations

Figure 7 Adaptation types

Agriculture Victoria is undertaking climate focused research through its **SmartFarm** network to better prepare farmers for climate change and extreme weather events. This includes testing new orchard designs with advanced technologies such as retractable netting and agrivoltaics to protect fruit quality, as well as investigating mixed sward pastures to improve pasture persistence under dry conditions and to reduce enteric methane emissions from livestock.

This action aligns with the *Water Sector Emissions Transition Plan's* circular economy innovation priority. Under Action 11 of the Plan: 'Investigate and trial low carbon and circular technologies for biosolids' there is opportunity for reducing fertiliser dependence through expansion of digestate use, supporting improved agricultural resilience.

Action 2: Collaborate with industry and supply chains to support the uptake of adaptation-focused solutions to achieve greater climate capability and enhance business and workforce climate readiness across Victoria's primary production system

Adaptation type:



Led by Agriculture Victoria with Department of Jobs Skills Industry and Regions, Department of Education, and Victorian Fisheries Authority

Climate risks are increasingly affecting the viability of primary production businesses and workforce, and driving higher costs for insurance, maintenance, training and asset management.

The Victorian Government will respond by supporting industry to anticipate, manage and reduce these risks through targeted industry engagement, practical outreach and training.

This action aims to:

- strengthen operational capability and business planning across industries and supply chains by delivering practical services, targeted technical advice, and innovative decision-support tools
- train, upskill and retain a climate-ready workforce equipped with the skills needed for long term transition to new climate-smart business models
- improve workforce health, safety and psychological wellbeing across the primary production system, through risk-based climate stress management planning and targeted, place-based workforce interventions.

This action builds on initiatives, including the **Future Drought Fund** which supports farming industries and regional

communities to strengthen drought resilience and climate readiness. As part of this work, Phase Two of **the Farm Business Resilience and Regional Drought Resilience Planning Programs** will deliver new tools, data and technical climate services to build the knowledge, skills and capability of farmers and communities.

The government will support safer workplaces, both physically and culturally, by strengthening industry, organisational and individual adaptive capabilities to plan for and respond effectively to climate change.

Mental and physical health support for climate-exposed workforces, particularly during periods of climatic stress and disaster recovery, will be delivered through initiatives such as the **Farming Safe and Well Program**. Supported by a \$2.1 million investment over three years, the program will improve farm safety and preparedness for extreme weather and climate events.

The Victorian *Biosecurity Strategy (2023)* and *Implementation Plan* (released for public consultation in 2026) set out the Government's priority to position biosecurity as a shared responsibility, requiring strong partnerships with industry and community, co-designed delivery, and active participation across the system to manage risks effectively.

Action 3: Embedding climate risks and adaptation into policy and delivery, supporting continuous access to key natural resources, assets, inputs and markets supported by cross- sector partnerships

Adaptation type:



Led by Agriculture Victoria with Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action, Department of Treasury and Finance, and Victorian Fisheries Authority

The agriculture, forestry and fishing industries depend directly on land and water to produce food, fibre and livestock products, making them particularly vulnerable to both acute and long-term climate risks. These impacts are compounded by reliance on supply chains for inputs (including fuel, energy and fertiliser) and market access, further increasing system's vulnerability to disruption.

The sector's high vulnerability to climate hazards also necessitates coordinated emergency preparedness and recovery to sustain production, livelihoods and food security

A coordinated, system-wide approach strengthens the sector's overall ability to withstand climate-related disruption.

Agribusiness is a priority sector under the Victorian Government's *Economic Growth Statement*, recognised for its role in driving productivity, regional jobs and export growth. Delivering on this ambition requires strong collaboration between government, regional communities and industry to manage cross-system risks, reduce regulatory barriers and unlock investment.

This action aims to:

- establish focused, deliberate collaboration across government portfolios, regional bodies and industries to use the latest data to understand cross-sector climate risks, and to align responsibilities and resources to achieve transformational adaptation
- embed climate change adaptation principles across policy, program and regulatory settings to strengthen preparedness for, and recovery from, increasingly frequent and extremes weather events
- integrate climate action in Victorian Government investment decisions to stimulate innovation and enable long-term transformational change across the primary production system.

This joined up approach will maximise opportunities for economic growth and productivity by strengthening the resilience of the primary production system, including improved access to the natural resources,

assets, inputs and markets needed to sustain productivity and profitability in a changing climate.

This action supports evidence-based decision- making, enabling government and industry to better anticipate and manage climate risks and improve preparedness for extreme weather events.

The action includes a strong focus on lifting productivity and strengthening sovereign capability through smarter regulatory reform, climate resilient infrastructure investment and integrated planning across government portfolios and regions.

Initiatives such as **Strategic Agricultural Land and Development 2.0** will provide improved data and guidance to inform climate-based land use decisions. The coexistence of multiple land uses will be enabled through initiatives such as the **VicGrid Strategic Land Use Assessment** and the **Victorian Minerals Roadmap**, supporting coordinated and transparent planning. Reforms to animal industry planning, alongside farm forestry programs and improved ecosystem management, will further strengthen landscape resilience, environmental outcomes and long-term industry adaptation.

The Victorian Government will continue to deliver strategic water infrastructure projects in partnership with communities, water customers and government

stakeholders. This includes modernising and reconfiguring irrigation and water supply systems to improve water efficiency, strengthen supply reliability, and deliver better outcomes for agricultural productivity and regional communities.

The project seeks to deliver a range of benefits, including improved system reliability, water security and drought resilience. These projects follow several irrigation modernisation and water efficiency projects completed in recent years, including in the Goulburn-Murray Irrigation District (northern Victoria), Sunraysia Irrigation Area (north-west Victoria), Macalister Irrigation District (Gippsland) and the Werribee Irrigation District (west of Melbourne).

Action 4: Support First Peoples' self-determination in climate resilience initiatives that protect Country, culture and community wellbeing

Adaptation type:



Led by Agriculture Victoria with the wider Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action

Traditional land management approaches - often described as Caring for Country - offer valuable insights into sustainable landscape management, water stewardship and biodiversity protection, which can strengthen

the long-term productivity and resilience of land used for primary production.

Across government, initiatives such as **Cultural Burning** programs, partnerships through catchment management authorities, and collaborative land and water planning are demonstrating how Traditional Owner knowledge can complement modern agricultural and environmental management, delivering stronger outcomes for landscapes, communities and industries.

This action aims to:

- build a shared understanding of Traditional Owner views on Caring for Country, particularly in relation to climate risks and opportunities to strengthen climate resilience.

The Victorian Government will work with First Peoples, including Aboriginal Victorians, Recognised Aboriginal Parties and Traditional Owner Corporations, to strengthen partnerships and ensure Traditional Owner perspectives inform land and water decision-making. Through initiatives such as the **Future Drought Fund Regional Drought Resilience Plans**, the Victorian Government and Traditional Owners will collaborate to build drought resilience on Country and develop shared approaches to managing climate risks.

This action will support the Treaty process by working with First Peoples to incorporate Traditional Owner aspirations for caring for Country into land and resource management, while respecting and protecting First Nations knowledge. It recognises the role of traditional practices in improving soil health, biodiversity and landscape resilience to climate impacts, including through approaches that safeguard knowledge ownership and provenance. When combined with contemporary agricultural science - such as technologies to help diversify and scale native food and botanical production - these practices can support more sustainable and resilient land management over time.

Glossary

Term	Definition	
Adaptation	Any process of adjusting to actual or expected climate and its effects that— (a) in human systems, seeks to moderate or avoid harm or exploit beneficial opportunities; and (b) in natural systems, may be facilitated by human intervention.	The Climate Action Act 2017
Adaptation Action Plans	The Victorian Government's plans across 7 systems in the <i>Climate Action Act 2017</i> plus energy to ensure Victoria's climate resilience, now and in the future. The systems are: built environment, education and training, energy, health and human services, natural environment, primary production, transport and water cycle systems.	DEECA, The Climate Action Act 2017
Climate change	Changes in the state of the climate, including an increase in the occurrence of extreme weather events, long-term changes in weather patterns and sea-level rise, attributed directly or indirectly to human activity.	Victoria's Climate Science Report 2024
Climate Change Strategy	A 5-year plan that outlines the Government of Victoria's priorities in relation to— (a) adaptation; and (b) the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions; and (c) planning for the State's transition to meet the challenges of climate change and to capitalise on the opportunities created by climate change.	The Climate Action Act 2017
Climate hazard	A natural or human-caused event or condition that may cause damage and loss	Victoria's Climate Science Report 2024
Climate risk	The potential negative effects of a climate hazard, including environmental, societal and financial impacts, which includes consequences on lives, livelihoods, health and wellbeing, ecosystems and species, economic, infrastructure, services, social and cultural assets.	IPCC 2021
Disaster	A serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society at any scale due to hazardous events interacting with conditions of exposure, vulnerability and capacity, leading to one or more of the following: human, material, economic or environmental losses and impacts.	Victoria's Climate Change Strategy 2026-2030, IPCC AR6
Extreme weather	A weather event that is rare at a particular place and time of year. Examples of extreme weather events are heatwaves, bushfires, storms, floods and droughts.	Victoria's Climate Science Report 2024, IPCC AR6
Maladaptation	Actions that may lead to increased risk of adverse climate-related outcomes, including via increased greenhouse gas emissions, increased vulnerability to climate change, or diminished welfare, now or in the future. Maladaptation is usually an unintended consequence.	IPCC AR6
Mitigation (of climate change)	A human intervention to reduce the sources or enhance the sinks of greenhouse gases.	IPCC AR6
Resilience	The ability of a system, community or society exposed to climate hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate, adapt to, transform and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions through risk management.	Victoria's Climate Change Strategy 2026-2030

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