

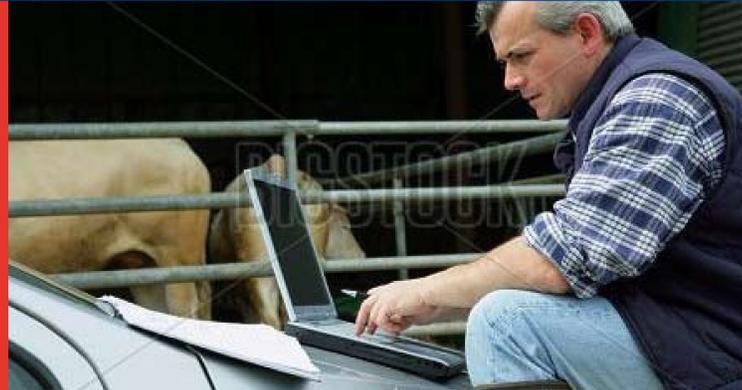
Collaborative solutions – VCCCAR/BoM Climate Services Think Tank

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Understanding, predicting and presenting weather and climate information is a core part of adapting to the impacts of climate change. This 'grand task' requires collaboration and understanding of the sectors (both public and private) that make up our communities.



The VCCCAR Climate Services Think Tank brought together university researchers, Bureau of Meteorology scientists and users of information in government and community to discuss key issues and opportunities for Victoria in climate services for adaptation.

The collaborators

The Victorian Centre for Climate Change Adaptation Research (VCCCAR) and the Bureau of Meteorology (BoM)

VCCCAR was established in 2009 as a partnership between Victorian universities and funded by the Victorian Government. The Centre aims to support adaptation to climate change by undertaking research that improves decision-making capacity on climate change impacts and adaptation options.

The BoM contributes to national social, economic, cultural and environmental goals by providing observational, meteorological, hydrological and oceanographic services. It also undertakes research into science and environment related issues in support of its operations and services. Data is made available to generate products that range from copies of basic climate data through to providing processed datasets, a diverse suite of climate summaries, atlases and specialised analyses in various forms.

VCCCAR Think Tanks

Think Tanks facilitate the exchange of knowledge by creating space for learning. Scientists, policy makers, and other stakeholders can build a common understanding of key issues and discuss adaptation options in a facilitated dialogue. They provide the basis for the formation of new knowledge networks and future collaborations.

To date VCCCAR has sponsored 10 Think Tanks. Each Think Tank has a specific theme and engages with a range of stakeholders from the academic, public, private, and local community sectors.

The need for climate services to support adaptation

Provision of information on climate and weather is important as it contributes to economic and societal resilience. In adapting to climate change, effective provision of climate services requires information relevant to long-term planning and early warning of significant climate risks. It was recognised by both the BoM and VCCCAR that this was a common interest which was the starting point for the VCCCAR/BoM Climate Services Think Tank.

The goals

- To assess the current situation on climate information and adaptation.
- To build a greater common understanding of the expectations of climate information users and the capacity of information providers in providing information for adaptation to climate change.
- To provide recommendations for policy and guidance for research on improved climate services in a changing climate.

The format

Nine short presentations by experts and practitioners examined case studies from three key areas:

- Agriculture
- Flood
- Bushfire

Each area was introduced using three presentations, followed by café-style conversations. Participants then shared their findings. Key themes were summarised by a lead researcher and participants identified their key messages.

Who attended

Key climate providers, community stakeholders, practitioners and users of climate information, including representatives from the BoM, Victorian State Government departments, local government, research and academic institutions, private industry and regional farming communities.

“ We need to take a long-term view of providing information to encourage individuals to take more responsibility. — Think Tank Participant

Key findings

General observations

- Most users do not distinguish between weather and climate information.
- The needs for climate information vary considerably among different types of users and for different types of events.
- Too much information may be a problem.
- More analysis is required of bushfire incidence, climate variability and past patterns or events.
- There is a complex set of psychological and social issues that lie between the provision of climate information and individual/institutional decision-making.
- Improved understanding of how to frame weather and climate communication messages is required to increase engagement and response from different types of user communities.

“ Communicate by design. Design to communicate. — Think Tank Participant

Specific observations

Communication

Effective communication is a key component of delivering climate services. Information needs to be 'fit for purpose' and appropriately framed for the audience it is being delivered to. Understanding the different information chains and how they work is pivotal.

Data

Better monitoring is needed to effectively deliver climate services. The density of the observation network can limit the ability to provide high-level services. For example, flood forecasting is dependent on the continued availability of sufficient data from observation networks.

Research

There is a need for better prediction of extreme weather events and ways to obtain and provide better data for long-term planning. There is also a need to understand more fully decision-making in relation to climate-related events and the factors that influence this.

Policy

There are opportunities to develop new policy in relation to communication and education, private sector delivery of services, roles and responsibilities across sectors, and the understanding of climate risks and impacts to all aspects of our communities.

For further information and to view the report visit <http://www.vcccar.org.au>

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