

The 2020 Future Thinking Forum

Water, Agriculture and Biodiversity



Summary Report for Participants



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Overall Summary

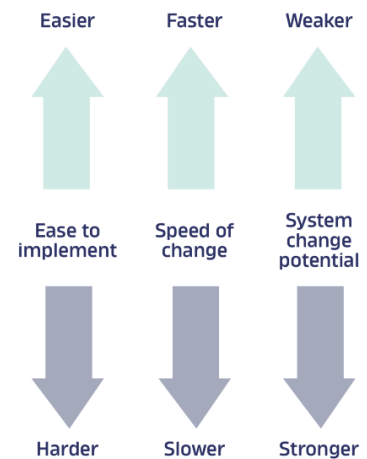
We need a sense of urgency, a sense of care, and a sense of purpose to **establish the resilience** of our State’s water supplies, biodiversity and agricultural sector in the face of the changing regional and global climate, which brings with it a drier Victoria, a change in annual rainfall patterns, a sustained rise in average temperatures, more frequent extreme weather events and, most concerning of all, an expectation of regular, devastating bushfire seasons.

Across all sectors and topics discussed at the Forum, there was a consistent, evidence-based view that **genuine societal and systemic transformation is needed** given the timeline, breadth and scale of the adaptation required, even under a 2030 scenario. There is consensus about what is needed to achieve real adaptation. There is a sense of urgency about where we want to be by 2030 and beyond. We need to collectively **embrace complexity** and understand what is required to operate under conditions of **sustained uncertainty**.

This transformation will require a sustained, all-in effort. **Adaptation decisions will not always be win-win decisions**, making them politically difficult for government, businesses, individuals, and communities to achieve, and for ideologues and industries requiring transition to accept. It will be essential to build a ground-up, locally focused accord when making these hard calls; a resource-intensive prospect based on establishing genuine relationships, building trust, promoting altruism and convening open discussions around the evidence base about regional futures.

There is strong evidence that for successful transformation, **solutions must be co-developed** with all landholders, rightsholders and stakeholders involved. Many interventions are highly contextual and specific to localities, while also requiring a broader understanding of how local conditions contribute to state-wide or even global systems. Rather than relying on the imposition of policy regimes on unreceptive communities and industries, we need to better value and acknowledge the need for genuine collaboration, **enabling locals** to face and address problems beyond the horizon to win transformational change.

Transformation is difficult, yet possible. If it were easy, we would have already done it – it will be *hard and slow*, but the outcome will be *strong*. It is also non-optional if we are to consider ourselves responsible for the future welfare of our State. **It is essential the difficult work of transformation starts now.**



The challenge is 100% doable. Government is good at thinking operationally and rolling out well planned programs of work; the key is to design the transformation process as a **long-term program**. There are many legislative and policy catalysts that can unlock the change needed (e.g., Climate Change Act 2017, Marine & Coastal Act 2018, Protecting Victoria’s Environment – Biodiversity 2037 (a 20-year plan), Recycling Victoria – a new economy, Water for Victoria – Water Plan 2016).

There are many interventions, some are tried and true with case studies from Victoria, and elsewhere. A number are cited in this summary. Some interventions can start now, while others will require a significant enabling of Government, communities, and some businesses to organise, behave and relate differently.

Transformation requires change in what we do and how we work. Working from a strong collaborative, co-creative model, Victoria can implement its *Climate Change Act* with a sense of purpose, pragmatism and citizen ownership. What is important to acknowledge is that **incremental change is not going to deliver the results** we need to see. Transformation can range from deliberate and planned through robust engagement all the way to that catalysed by a disaster. While the latter on this spectrum should not be the only catalyst of transformation, preparation for these opportunities are essential.

Transformation requires an **agility** from all layers of Government that is not commonly seen. Government and communities need to be supported to learn it is both realistic and acceptable not to be sure about the next steps in uncertain conditions, however it is essential to take these steps now.

A selection of related quotes from participants:

“We’re dealing with complex systems and wicked problems – they can’t be commanded and controlled.”

“(Given) We need new approaches to policy (and program) development that promote resilience - co-design and co-development of policy that can lead to transformational approaches.”

“(We need to) get over that policy hubris piece that we’ve fallen into before sometimes where a likely future is over-defined... when that happens, we’re sending false signals to individuals and enterprises and everyone trying to work in that region. And there’s lost effort, there’s lost time, there’s lost money and we don’t get the change that’s needed. We need to take a broader view based in resilience.”

The Summary Report



The Future Thinking Forum was an online collaborative forum run across three short, packed sessions (July 24th, August 4th, and September 4th, 2020) with a select group of senior public sector and academic leaders discussing the question “*Is Victoria resilient enough to cope with a harsher climate?*”, addressing the Water, Agriculture & Biodiversity systems (or sectors).

The Forum ran under Chatham House rules through a process designed to be silo-busting, interdisciplinary and solutions-focussed. Delivered under Stage Four pandemic

lockdown conditions in Victoria, it was necessarily delivered online with video conferencing tools.

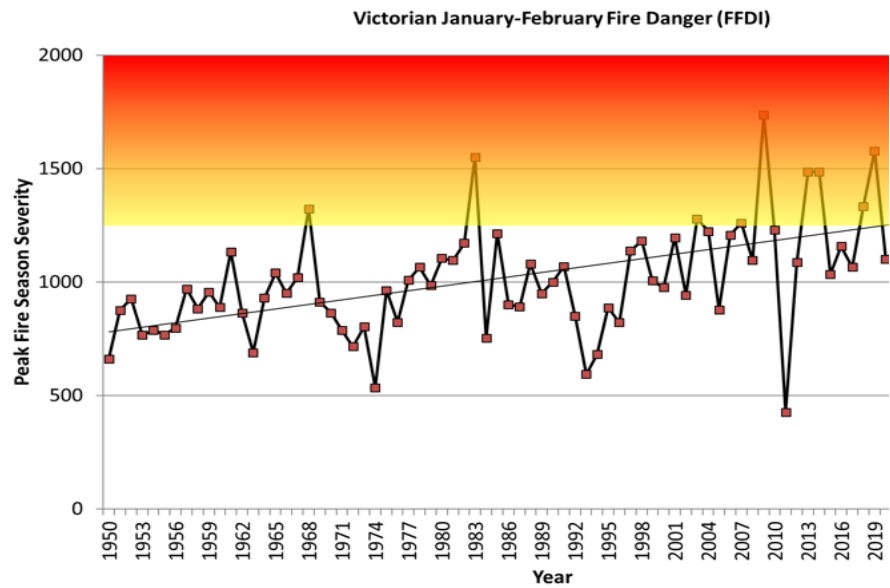
More than 85 individuals participated across the 3 sessions (74 in Session 1, 79 in Session 2, 75 in Session 3) from 33 organisations spanning 6 regions of Victoria beaming in from the country of 12 different Traditional Owners (represented by CEOs from the Barapa Barapa and Dja Dja Wurrung).

Convened by the Royal Society of Victoria and Science into Action, the Foundation Partners were the Bureau of Meteorology, the Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning, and the Department of Jobs, Precincts & Regions.



The Sessions

In **session 1**, the Bureau of Meteorology presented a “future scenario” of a likely 2030, focusing on the **Goulburn-Murray** region of Victoria. Understanding that extreme climate and weather conditions will become more frequent, with less time available for recovery of human, economic and ecological systems between, our presenters from the State Government were paired with scholarly counterparts to each explore Biodiversity, Agriculture and Water challenges and opportunities for fresh thinking. The discussion that emerged recurrently touched on the challenge of working with complex, interdependent systems to effect transformational change and a planning regime that embraces the resilience of these systems; whether from an academic, community or business perspective, thinking returned to reframing how we work with, and think about, nature. More information about [regional Victorian climate projections are available here](#).

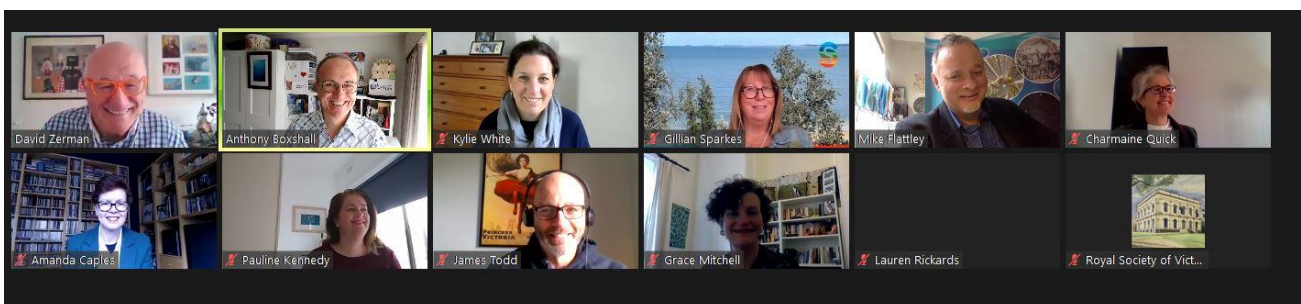


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In **session 2**, participants focused on suggesting interventions to enable adaption in four topics that enable adaptation: Decision-making in 2030; Enabling community agency for adaptation; Sector/System Overlap, and; Driving transformational change. They drew on experience, evidence, and case studies to load the frameworks provided with recommended actions.

In **session 3**, participants gathered to share the outputs from the break-out working groups in session 2, reflect on the interventions discussed, and to hear senior leaders’ reflections on potential pathways to implementation and priorities. As may now be familiar to veterans of government-academic forums, it was clear the appetite and capacity for risk in trying new initiatives diverged sharply; to win transformation at the local level, risks must be taken and failure will be a part of that experience on the long road to success. Pragmatically, governments are not permitted trial and error by the electorate, and it appears likely that extensive partnerships will be required to mediate the proposed self-determination process with regional communities.



What one thing do you hope FTF 2020 will achieve?

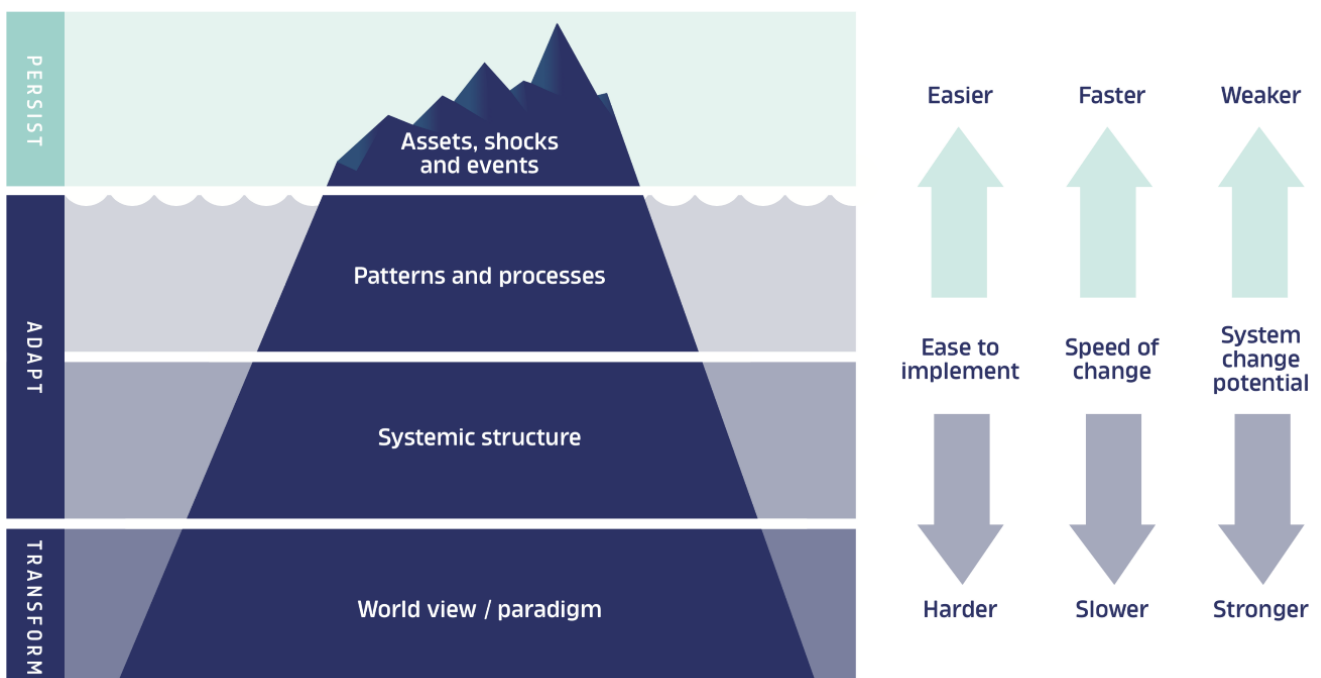
Mentimeter



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When asked in Session 1 what participants hoped to achieve from the Forum, the vast majority said “collaboration”.

The “iceberg model”



The Forum used the “iceberg” model (above) drawn from the [Goulburn Murray Resilience Strategy](https://goulburnmurrayresiliencestrategy.com.au/) (which is based on the Wayfinder models - <https://wayfinder.earth/the-wayfinder-guide/introduction/> - created by resilience experts from the Stockholm Resilience Centre) to frame discussions.

What we learned – key messages from Forum outputs

- **Genuine transformation** of many elements of the systems/sectors is needed, starting now, given the timeline, breadth and scale of the adaptation required even under a conservative 2030 scenario.
- Many interventions that enable transformation are highly context- and locally- specific. There is strong evidence that for successful transformation, **solutions must be co-developed** with all landholders, rightsholders and stakeholders involved as answers to a shared problem.
- There are **strong and known frameworks for transformation**, as well as clear case studies from Victoria and elsewhere showing what works for system/sector transformation, and what does not.
- Evidence shows that transformation requires an agility from “Government” that is not commonly seen. “Government” needs to be supported by the electorate while dealing with uncertainty and **understood as explorers of a changing and unfamiliar territory**. Transformation works this way.
- Transformational change will be necessary, and it is not inherently good. There are significant **risks of exacerbating existing vulnerabilities and inequities** and addressing these must be at the forefront of transformational change.
- Transformational adaptation is not just a technical exercise; it is also **social and political**. Transformational adaptation requires a high level of trust, an openness to questioning values and goals, and a willingness to change.
- **Legacy policy, governance and institutional settings may present a barrier to transformational adaptation**. Transformative approaches are significantly impeded (or impossible) in systems that are overly simplified and artificially divided, where stakeholders are anchored to the past, and where decision-makers have a low appetite for risk and an unwillingness to experiment and learn from mistakes.
- We need to **engage deeply with the community** (in its broadest definition – including the currently “voiceless”. Many interventions are highly context- and locally- specific.
- **Traditional Owners are a fundamental group** of rightsholders who need to be involved more deeply than they have been to now, and right from the start.
- In general, **genuine collaboration** (co-design, co-development) is given as critical to progressing adaptation. The application of co-design approaches has produced some new thinking and promising results to enable tough choices.
- We need to **be honest about the scale and seriousness of the problem**. Government agencies are important, but organisations one step removed (and in place) may be better positioned to do this with communities.
- There are important areas of overlap between the biodiversity, agriculture, and water systems/sectors. **Integration and alignment** of the approaches in the three systems in planning interventions is an essential outcome. There are case studies of places where all three systems can and are being managed jointly and well – in Victoria some exist in the work of Catchment Management Authorities.
- Decisions will need to be made that may be **unpopular** and not seen as the “*right things to do*” but are the “*good things to do*” to build resilience in these systems. Likewise, important **decisions should not be delayed because of future uncertainties**. Decisions about climate change adaptation should **take educated risks** and adopt a “learn and adjust” mindset.
- Adaptation decisions will inevitably involve trade-offs between water, agricultural and environmental priorities. Government and community should more readily engage in **difficult conversations** that accommodate diversity in values and perspectives and **take a system view of the problem**.
- **Transparent, place-based decisions** build community ownership around climate change adaptation. It is essential that decision-making is flexible and does not restrict future adaptation options as uncertainties unfold.

Interventions and Priorities – what should we do and in what order?

Twelve priority interventions were assessed by participants in a survey during the Forum. They are presented below in the original language from the Workshop with a short interpretation based on the discussion of each below. They were not necessarily a consensus view of the priorities but were drawn from headline messages and priorities from Session 1 (*further details have been added to clarify meaning*). They are (in priority order):

1. Actively build community **ownership** (*for transformation*)
Invest in programs that purposefully build a sense of ownership within the broad community for the need for transformation to respond to climate change.
2. Cultivate understanding of **need** for transformational change (*in all stakeholders*)
Build a deeper understanding of why transformational change is needed. The important word is the “need” – the rationale – why transform?
3. Better (actual) **integration** of policy development across agriculture, water, biodiversity
Relates to the need to integrate the way policy is developed across multiple sectors and stemmed from the reality that it is not a usual practice of policy development anywhere to connect all the related sectors. This is a global challenge.
4. Build authentic and accepted **understanding** of the problems and their possible solutions (*in stakeholders*)
Stems from a sense that all stakeholders will need to have roughly the same understanding of the kinds of problems and solutions that can be used. It will need to feel fair-dinkum (i.e., real) and generally accepted.
5. Make landscapes as **resilient** as possible
Ensure that at a landscape skill, the ecosystems and other natural systems are resilient to the kinds of disturbances that will come more regularly with changing climate.
6. More **diverse** structures and processes for adaptive decisions (*made by all involved*)
Use new and different approaches (structures and processes) for making decisions that can be adapted given that there will be so many regular, uncertain and unpredictable changes due to climate change.
7. **Collaborative** and learning tools and resources (*for all stakeholders*)
Purposefully invest in tools and resources to build the capability for all stakeholders to collaborate effectively, especially when working on tough problems.
8. **Decentralisation** of decision-making - new Governance models (*that are more local/targeted*)
There will need to be new Governance models for all kinds of decisions that can decentralise decisions-making and enable more local decisions and/or decisions to be taken by targeted groups of stakeholders with specific knowledge of the item at hand.
9. Broaden **definition** of community - include the (*currently*) voiceless
Bring all communities into the discussions and decisions, in particular those that have traditionally been on the margins or “voiceless” in decisions and discussions (for example Traditional Owners, lower socio-economic groups).
10. Government to lead in making some **tough calls**.
This was about decision-makers (especially Governments) taking harder and tougher decisions than they may be perceived by some stakeholders doing historically. It was a call for Government to lead in making some difficult decisions so that all other stakeholders would be freed to make the tough, different calls needed to transform. This originally

appeared in some workshop documentation as “Be tougher - move past what is the ‘right thing to do’” and the intention was clarified in later sessions.

11. Build on **experience** of GMID resilience project (and others) across Victoria

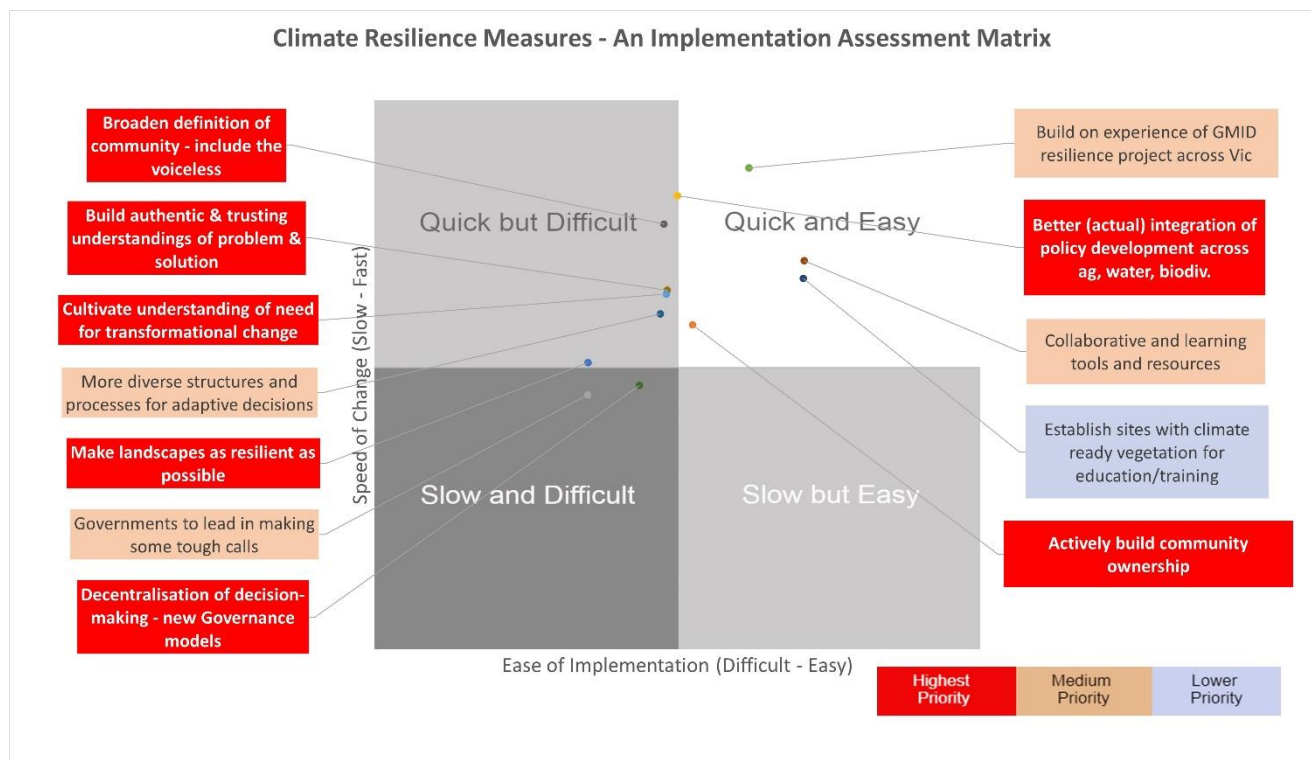
Use the lessons learned and the approach build by the GMID Resilience project as a case-study for other communities to build their own locally targeted pathway to a more resilient future.

12. Establish sites with climate-ready vegetation for **education/training**

Create show-case areas for stakeholders to visit and experience what climate-ready vegetation looks like in a Victorian context.

We asked participants (n=49, Session 2) to place these 12 interventions onto a set of axes showing their view of the priority (as measured by Importance – “not important at all” to “the most important”) against their view of the ease of implementation (“very difficult” to “very easy”). We also asked participants (n=38, Session 2) to place these 12 interventions onto a set of axes showing their view of the priority (as measured by Importance – “not important at all” to “the most important”) against their view of the what is an honestly possible speed of change (from by 2050 (i.e., slow pace) to “within a year (i.e., very fast). Finally, we asked participants (n=18, Session 3) these same questions however with Urgency as the measure of priority (i.e., “not urgent at all” to “the most urgent”). Unfortunately, few participants had time to respond the Urgent x Speed of Change survey.

These returned scores, against which we were able to assess attitudes and values held towards the various initiatives and interventions produced by Session One of the Future Thinking Forum. These were mapped against an implementation matrix, colour coded by priority:



Near the end of Session 2, 49 participants answered the question “If nothing else happens, what one intervention should occur by 2022?”. While many used slightly different words, a summary of those used showed the following calls to action displayed in the table to the right.

There is likely overlap in the intent of many participants, however this table shows a need for fundamental change to some current practices and a mandate to continue others.

In **Session 3**, when asked, “what intervention should start/continue with priority from now?” 23 individuals participants gave a range of suggestions.

While this is not a precise analytical tool for a table of text like Table 1, it is instructive to collate what words are used more than others, suggesting where the focus of the priority actions need to be:

Community; Regional; Place-based; Traditional owner/Indigenous; Adaptation; Transformational; Climate Change; Planned.

Verb summary of activity required by 2022	Count
Collaborate/cooperate	8
Communicate for understanding	7
Communities are central	5
Change underlying economics	4
Act now	4
Take Risks	3
Build on good work	2
Leadership	2
Act on Big picture	2
Access Knowledge	2
Commit to Change	1
Localise	1
Onsets	1
Build urgency	1
Networks	1
Engage	1
Justice	1
Treaty	1
Decentralise	1
Empower	1
Grand Total	49



In **Session 3**, when asked, “It’s 2030. What would the Victorian community have expected we have done by now?” 24 individuals participants gave a range of suggestions. While there is a lot of important detail in the participants outputs, the general themes from Table 2 and the previous sessions of what the community would have expected to be done by 2030 are:

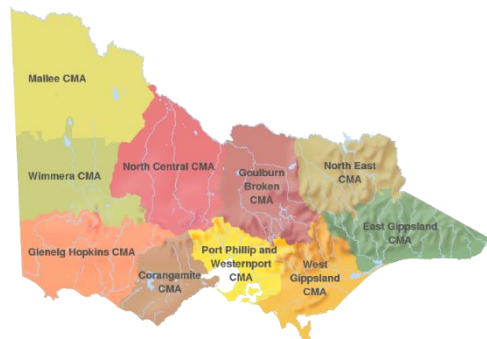
- Transformation of the energy sector. Zero Emissions.
- Local and place-based adaptations/transformations are normalised.
- Community is active in transformation and feels listen to.
- Traditional Owners genuinely embedded in the adapting/ed systems.
- Made evidence-based decisions.
- Some hard calls have been made about some activities (e.g., marginal land under production).

Pathways to implement:

Case Studies highlighted

A number of case studies were highlighted as examples worth noting of strongly adaptive or transformational change that are needed. They are listed here in no particular order.

- At regional level, the **Catchment Management Authorities** (CMAs) are undertaking processes with communities and agencies to look at climate adaptation planning and resilience thinking as part of the **Regional Catchment Strategy** process. There are examples of cross-systems planning with integrated catchment management. It was noted that CMAs have been leading the way in Climate Change adaptation planning since 2012 (see www.nrmclimate.vic.gov.au, specifically <https://nrmclimate.vic.gov.au/data-and-projects/514/>). Cross-system activity occurs with integrated catchment management.



- There are good examples of successful cross system programs (such as farmers assisting conservation of the **Plains Wanderers** (a vulnerable bird species) in northern Victoria, or communities growing sustainable coffee and supporting **Tree Kangaroos** in Papua New Guinea). It was noted that we can learn from these examples and adapt to other programs and industries in Victoria.



National Recovery Plan for the Plains-wanderer (*Pedionomus torquatus*)



June 2016



- A case study was presented about transitioning to **Bendigo’s water sensitive future** by **Dr Briony Rogers** (left, Monash Sustainable Development Institute and Water Sensitive Cities CRC). The following summed up a broad view:

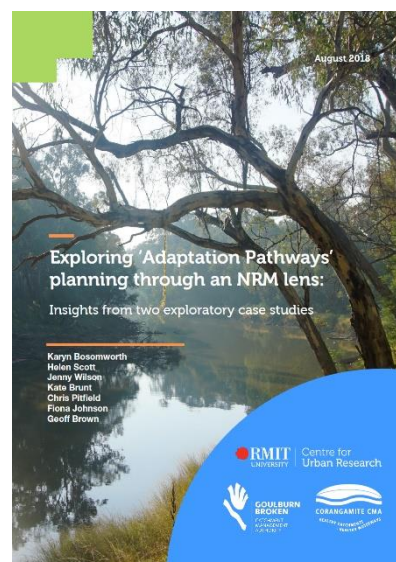
“Bendigo is an excellent case study of the importance of innovative, inclusive, place-based research with a long-term vision!”

- Place-based adaptation planning and action - where stakeholders, community, and government work together but solutions are developed BY the community – **the DELWP regional adaptation program** was cited as an example.
- The [Indi community’s co-design process](#) highlighted as an example to follow of deep co-design.



- Place-based and community development approach to **cross-sector regional climate change planning** has occurred in the [Mallee](#).
- While no specific case study was cited, there are good examples in **Agroforestry and organic farming pioneers** in Victoria.
- The **DRIFT program in Rotterdam** was cited as a successful transition management pilot for harbour and energy transition.

The **Goulburn Broken CMA** held workshops with the community of the **Strathbogrie Ranges** to discuss the potential transformation of some attributes of the ‘Bogies’ that they love and to identify what were the ‘no-regrets’ pathways. The [adaptation pathways approach](#) assisted them to do this.



- After flooding of the **Lokyer Valley** in Queensland in 2010-11, the local Council offered to swap Council-owned land (that was above the 2011 flood lines) for land affected by flooding. The swap was based on the size of land parcels and applicants did not have to make any financial contributions. The move affected about one third of the population and there was less than six months between the disaster and the first stage of land release.
- **‘Room to Move’** is a new project the **East Gippsland CMA** will commence in 2020. The work seeks to prepare for sea level rise in the Gippsland Lakes to protect environmental assets, cultural heritage values, community infrastructure and social value. The project will create new habitat areas branching out from the Gippsland Lakes to allow species to move before significant sea level rise.

Who should do what?

Role of Government

While there is a lot of important detail in the session outputs, the general themes and the previous sessions of the role of Government are:

Enabling; Prioritizing; Embracing uncertainty; Facilitating; Empowering communities; Resourcing; Support; Breaking down silos in Government; Collaborate; Making some hard calls

Role of Community

While there is a lot of important detail in the session outputs, the general themes and the previous sessions of the role of the broader Community are: Central; Trusted; Vital; Have ownership and can make some hard calls locally; Working together; Supported to asking hard questions; Engaged; Co-creating Solutions

Role of Business/Industry

While there is a lot of important detail in the session outputs, the general themes and the previous sessions of the role of the business/industry are: Part of community decision-making; Seen as acting on climate change; Innovating; Trying different things; Adapting themselves; Incentivised to contribute; Break-down silos; Taking a more holistic view; Central - especially to survive as businesses.



Reflections about readiness and solutions – Session 3

In Session 3, there were a series of discussions and perspectives put by (mainly) Government leaders about the climate change challenges, the transformations needed, possible interventions, and what might be the role of the various players in achieving the adaptation needed. They are captured here.

Traditional owners all have a strong narrative on adaptation in their area. We need to support the engagement of communities, businesses and traditional owners to collaborate in building solutions at a regional level.

The community needs to be given agency, ownership and a role in deliberation, being resourced to make “hard calls” (as with Buchan during the 2019-20 fires) as an altruistic quality of any human collective.

We need a sense of urgency with a sense of care which needs to come through in our discussion but not in a panicked way. We will need to bring together a strong collaborative model and implement the Climate Change Act with a sense of purpose and pragmatism. We need to describe the elephant in the room and bite it off one bit at the time.

We need to coalesce around one important issue to “solve”. Biodiversity offers the opportunity to be the issue. Science and evidence-based approaches can be developed and used. The Victorian State of Environment report indicates that biodiversity decline is a fundamental issue. We need to collaborate, as well as be guided by traditional owners. All of us can gather around biodiversity to focus on “one-thing”.

Programs of activities (not projects) are the ways to get things done. We need an authorising environment to have a 5- or 10-year plan to act on this urgent 2030 timeframe. Victoria has the Climate Change Act which enables transformational adaptation. We need to communicate better to the general public about the fact that we have this act and what it means. The international community is likely unaware of this Act. As we are part of the global community, we can draw on international expertise and case studies.

If it were easy, we would have already done it – it will be hard and slow, but the outcome will be strong. It is essential that transformation starts now. We value and acknowledge that we need collaboration. It should be how we problem-solve from now.

Science allows us to visually represent issues and knowledge in a way that we currently may not use enough. There is a strong education piece to get “the science” out to the broader community.

People are central to how we transform – we need a grass-roots movement. We need to “communicate for understanding” and start at a place-based community level.

This challenge is 100% “tractable”. It is doable. Government is good at thinking operationally and rolling out well planned programs of work. Design transform that way. Look for the catalyst to unlock the change that is needed (perhaps it is embedding the Climate Change Act?).

We need to let go of our individual empires and break silos by collaborating. We need to build consensus on how to make different (essential) decisions. We need to trial things in Government and focus on the things that work well with some clear and strategic near-term wins to keep our motivation high. Government can and should embrace uncertainty.

While there seems to be a long lead time, there are some hard questions that need to be asked across sectors that cannot be shied away from.

There is a strong message about the need for transformation which is dependent on us and the institutions with which we work, which is not without its challenges. We need more holistic thinking and solutions. We live in an interconnected system; need to think in integrated ways.

Adaptation decisions will not always be win-win decisions. These are difficult for government, businesses, individuals, and communities. It will be essential to build consensus when making these difficult decisions.

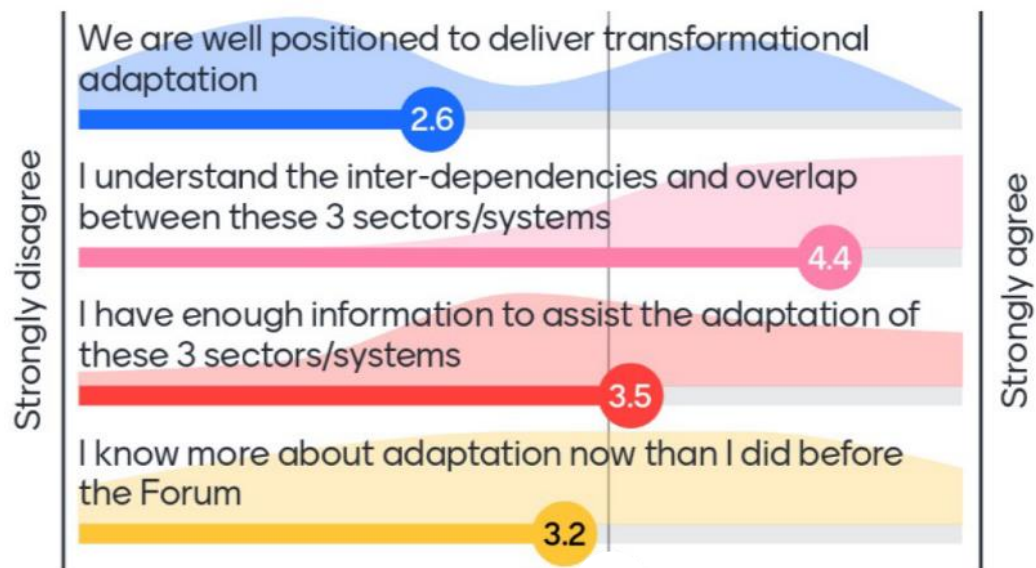
There is a sense of urgency about where we want to be by 2030 and it will require embracing complexity and uncertainty. We will need to consider how our organisations are organised to face the size of this challenge. We will need to trial things to focus on innovation.

One of the gaps for Government, community and business is to work out what the current strengths are that we can use to drive change. This will need to be a sectoral approach and may identify different pathways for change (e.g., supply chains, landscape management).

This is a shared endeavour about the need for transformation – now is the time – we are at a crossroads.

Did we achieve the aims?

While a lower number of participants filled in this question (n=19, Session 3) than attended the Forum overall, in short it shows a deep understanding of the inter-connectedness of the systems/sectors, that in general participants have enough information to assist the necessary adaptation, there is a broad spread about if the Forum increased participant knowledge about adaptation (some yes, some no, some a little), and finally that there is a split in the participant view about if we are well positioned to deliver transformational adaptation. Some feel strongly that we are, while others disagree.



Our Resilient Future - What do the public think?

In a separate session to the Future Thinking Forum, The Royal Society of Victoria and Science into Action convened a related online [public event](#) for National Science Week (Thursday, 20 August, 2020) titled “Our Resilient Future.” The interventions from Session 2 of the Future Thinking Forum were discussed, and members of the public ranked them on the same axes as participants. It is likely that this was a relatively scientifically aware audience as they were attending an online event in Science Week run by the Royal Society of Victoria.

We first asked the members of the public if they felt they knew enough about adapting to climate change. 154 people responded strongly agreeing that they wished they knew more about how to adapt to climate change.

I wish I knew more about how to adapt to climate change

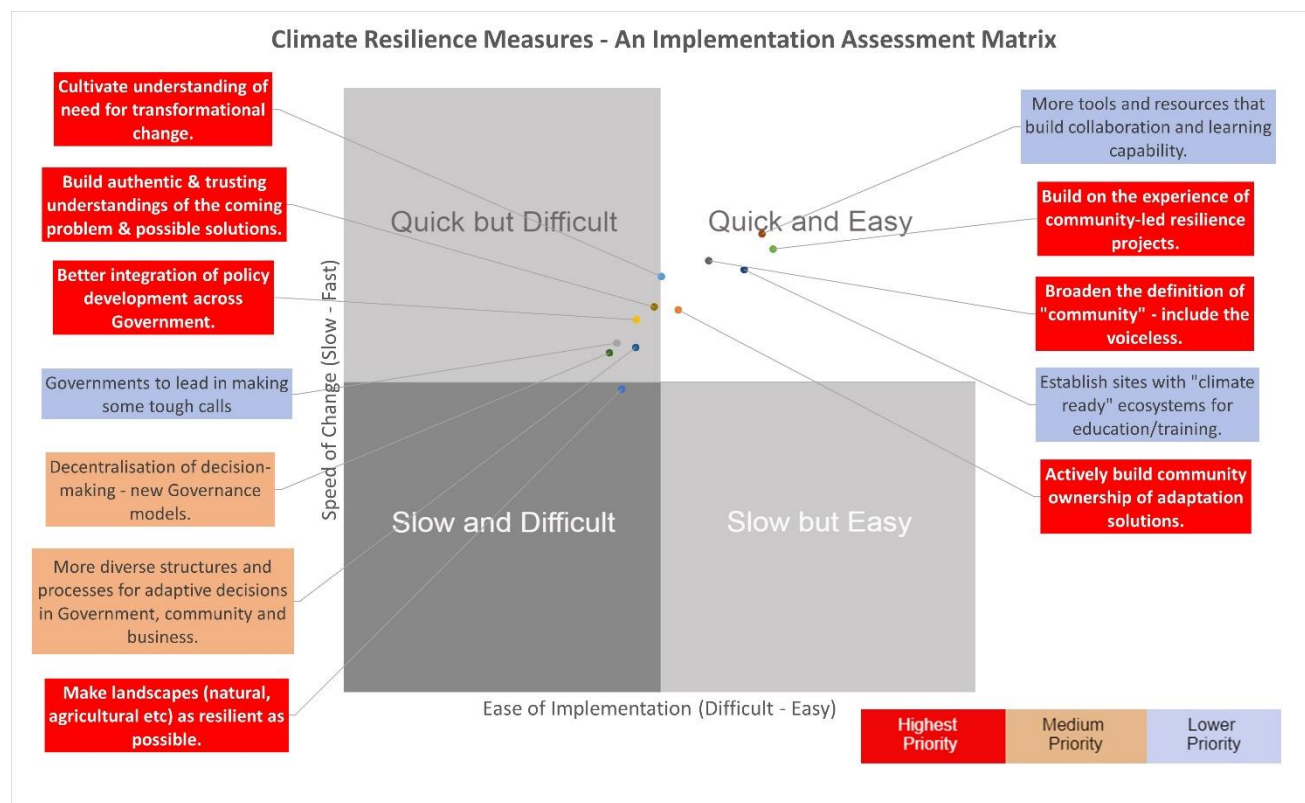
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Next, we asked the public (n=64) to rank the same 12 priority interventions assessed by participants in the Forum. The results are compared below.

Priority	Our Resilient Future (Community)	Future Thinking Forum (Govt/Academia)
1.	Make landscapes as resilient as possible	Actively build community ownership (for transformation)
2.	Cultivate understanding of need for transformational change (in all stakeholders)	Cultivate understanding of need for transformational change (in all stakeholders)
3.	Actively build community ownership (for transformation)	Better (actual) integration of policy development across agriculture, water, biodiversity
4.	Build on experience of GMID resilience project (and others) across Victoria	Build authentic and accepted understanding of the coming problems and possible solutions (in stakeholders)
5.	Build authentic and accepted understanding of the coming problems and possible solutions (in stakeholders)	Make landscapes as resilient as possible
6.	Establish sites with climate-ready vegetation for education/training	More diverse structures and processes for adaptive decisions (made by all involved)
7.	Broaden definition of community - include the (currently) voiceless	Collaborative and learning tools and resources (for all stakeholders)
8.	Collaborative and learning tools and resources (for all stakeholders)	Decentralisation of decision-making - new Governance models (that are more local/targeted)
9.	More diverse structures and processes for adaptive decisions (made by all involved)	Broaden definition of community - include the (currently) voiceless
10.	Better (actual) integration of policy development across agriculture, water, biodiversity	Government to lead in making some tough calls
11.	Decentralisation of decision-making - new Governance models (that are more local/targeted)	Build on experience of GMID resilience project (and others) across Victoria
12.	Government to lead in making some tough calls	Establish sites with climate-ready vegetation for education/training

We also asked the public the same survey questions. First (n=107), priority (as measured by Importance) against their view of the ease of implementation. Second (n=83), their view of the priority (as measured by Importance) against their view of the what is an honestly possible speed of change (by 2050 (i.e., slow pace) to “within a year (i.e., very fast). Third, we asked the public (n=74) the same questions however with urgency as the measure of priority against the Ease of implementation. Finally, we asked the public about their view (n=50) of urgency against their honest view of the possible speed of change (from by 2050. Again, these returned aggregated scores, against which we assessed attitudes and values held towards the various initiatives and interventions produced by Session One of the Future Thinking Forum. These were again mapped against a further implementation matrix, colour coded here by priority:



Comparisons: Government/Academia and Community

Below we explore where the outlooks of the two forums align, diverge, or otherwise equivocate:

Aligned Outlooks

1. Make Landscapes as Resilient as Possible

It would be reasonable to consider this **the main transformational objective** rather than one of the initiatives that will enable it, however the assessment by the two forums was essentially the same – **high priority**, **difficult** to achieve, **medium speed** to deliver. It’s notable that the community forum identified this as the **number one** priority, while the Future Thinking Forum ranked this as **number five**.

2. Actively Build Community Ownership of Adaptation Solutions

Both the government/academic forum and the community forum agreed this initiative was both a very **high priority** and could be achieved with relatively **high ease and speed**. This was the government/academic forum’s **number one** priority, **number three** for the community forum.

3. *Cultivate Understanding of the Need for Transformational Change*

Both forums agreed this initiative was both a very **high priority** and could be achieved relatively **quickly**, albeit with some **difficulty**. Both forums classified this measure as the **number two** priority, the only direct alignment in the two priority lists.

4. *Build Authentic and Trusting Understandings of the Coming Problem and Possible Solutions*

This measure essentially interacts with the previous one and achieved the same assessment from both forums: **high priority**, **difficult** to do, **fast** to achieve.

5. *Better Integration of Policy Development Across Government*

Both forums agreed this was a **high priority**, should be **quick**, and is obviously **difficult** (or it would already be done).

6. *More Diverse Structures and Processes for Adaptive Decisions in Government, Community and Business*

Both forums agreed this was a **medium priority**, **difficult** to implement but **reasonably fast** to achieve.

7. *Establish Sites with Climate-Ready Ecosystems/Vegetation for Education/Training*

Both forums agreed this would be **fast and easy** to achieve, but also a **lower priority**.

Equivocal Outlooks

1. *Build on the Experience of Community-Led Resilience Projects (e.g. GMID, Bendigo)*

Both forums considered this a **quick and easy** measure to implement, however the community forum identified this as a very **high priority** while the government/academic forum identified it as a **medium priority**.

2. *Collaborative and Learning Tools/Resources*

While both forums agreed this is a **quick and easy** measure to take, the community forum considered it a **lower priority** than the government/academic forum’s **medium priority**.

3. *Broaden the Definition of “Community” – Include the Voiceless*

Both forums considered this measure a **high priority** – however, the community forum expected this would be **quick and easy**, while the government/academic forum considered the undertaking to be **difficult**.

Divergent Outlooks

1. *Government to lead in making some tough calls*

This intervention was a little ambiguous (especially given the original text written before clarifying the intent: i.e., *Be tougher - move past what is the ‘right thing to do’*), but essentially spoke to the need for governments and other decision-makers to make tougher decisions to show all stakeholders how we all need to make some tough calls. Rather than it being about Government wielding more authority on climate adaptation measures, it was about leading the way in making the hard calls, not just the good calls. Without the deep context from the full Forum, it seems to have been interpreted differently by the community. The community may have interpreted it as conferring more authority on government, and unsurprisingly considered it a **lower priority** and perceiving the measure as **difficult yet fast** to implement, while the government/academic forum considered the measure a **medium priority** that would be both **difficult and slow** to implement.

2. Decentralisation of Decision Making – New Governance Models

Again, the community was less engaged on the governance question, acknowledging the change would be **difficult** but also considering it relatively **fast** to implement, rating it a **medium priority**. In comparison, the government/academic forum rated this a **high priority**, agreed it would be **difficult** but also asserted it would be **slow** to implement; potentially worthy of the label “**transformational** initiative.”

Comparison of findings: FTF 2018 to FTF 2020

In 2018, a similar Chatham House Forum was held discussing a slightly different question, “*Is Victoria’s liveability resilient to extreme weather and a changing climate?*” covering the sectors of energy, transport, human health, and urban liveability.

While there was a richness of perspectives and details in the FTF 2018, at a summary level it was clear from the sessions examining each of the four forum themes that there were several overarching findings. There was strong agreement on the need for the following:

- Collaboration within and between sectors and agencies
- Communication with the community, underpinned by social equity
- Analysing and applying big data
- Policy implementation and action (not just policy development)
- Planning predicated on climate change and climate risk.

To quote one forum participant:

There are a lot of actions that we can take now that will improve our climate resilience and also bring immediate societal benefit. Anything to do with climate and weather resilience can be applied now. This is not a “future problem”.

While it is clear that much has happened since 2018 in climate change adaptation in Victoria, it is also important to note that getting the fundamental underpinning elements above are mostly still the most important areas of focus to drive more transformative adaptation.

Next Steps

The Victorian Government will embed the ideas from this forum into place-based and sector-wide adaptation planning and action. Victorian adaptation programs are being delivered in unison at state, regional and local scales. The Victorian Government also provides up-to-date climate change science and local scale projection data for all of Victoria to build a detailed understanding of exposure to potential risks and impacts.

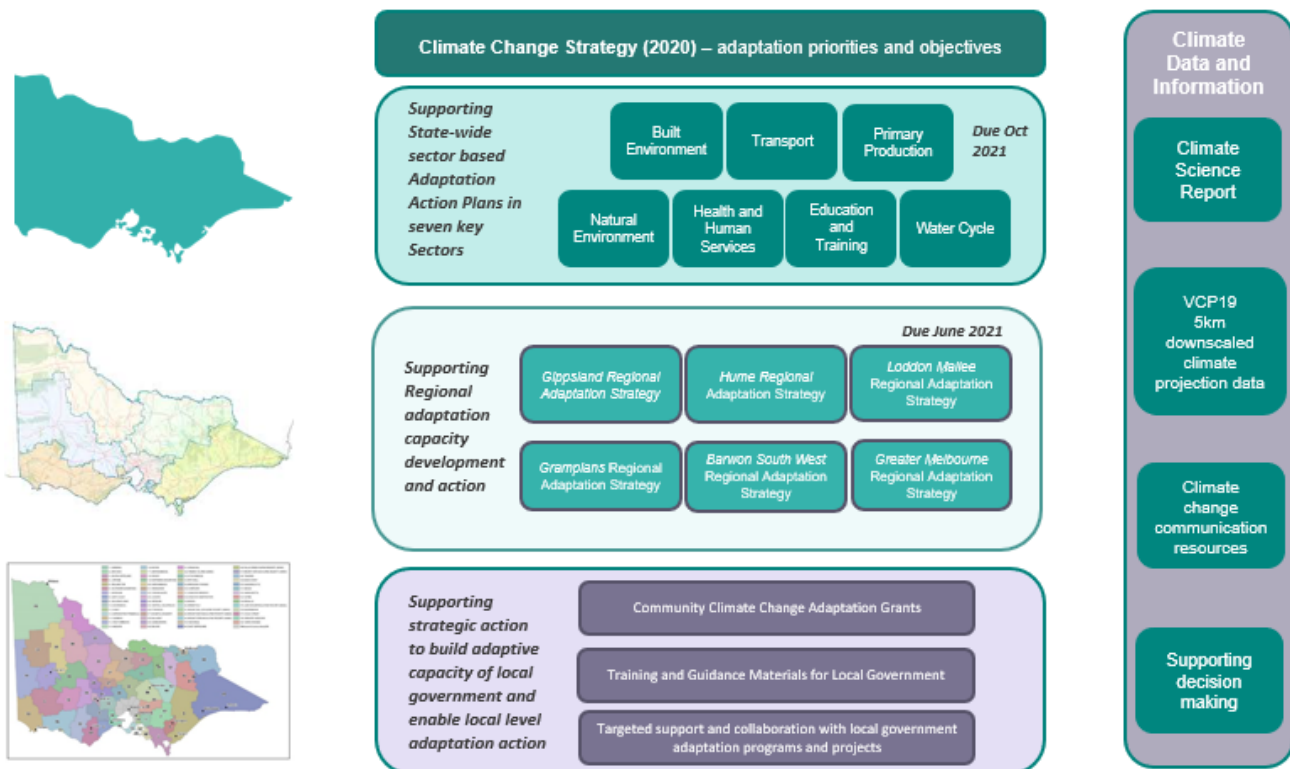
At the state scale, the Victorian Government is preparing **Adaptation Action Plans** under the *Climate Change Act 2017* for key systems that are either vulnerable to climate change impacts or are essential to ensure Victoria is prepared. These systems are the natural environment, built environment, water system, primary production, transport, health and human services, and education and training.

At a regional scale, **Regional Adaptation Strategies** are being developed to provide regional stakeholders with a framework to identify, prioritise and deliver place-based adaptation action. DELWP has supported the establishment of *Regional Adaptation Stakeholder Committees* in each region to develop, engage in and, where possible, lead the adaptation planning process to develop Regional Adaptation Strategies for each DELWP region. Beyond the stakeholder

committees, the adaptation planning process is also engaging with a wide range of different stakeholders across the region including local government to draw in diverse local knowledge and expertise and build a rich picture of the region.

At a local scale, local governments play a critical role in helping their communities to adapt to climate change. Building a strong and enduring partnership with local government is a central pillar of the Victorian Government’s approach to helping communities adapt to climate change. Local governments are often the first to respond to localised impacts, and their strong connections to the community and local knowledge mean they are often best placed to recognise the need for adaptation at a local scale. The Victorian Government provides targeted support and collaborate with local government to build their adaptive capacity, help local government overcome constraints on their ability to adapt, and provide training and guidance materials to enable local level adaptation action. In 2019, the \$1million **Community Climate Change Adaptation (3CA) Grants** was announced to support local community adaptation action, encourage partnerships, and share adaptation knowledge and learning.

Supporting adaptation interventions at each scale is the **Climate Data and Information program** that provides up-to-date climate change science, communication tools, and decision-making support for Victorian decision makers to build a detailed understanding of exposure to potential risks and impacts.



Use of this report

This report is intended for participants of the Future Thinking Forum 2020 to assist them in planning for resilience, adaptation, and transformation to climate change in Victoria. As the Forum was under Chatham House rules, the intention is that participants can use outputs from this Forum to progress the objectives of the Forum, however participants may not attribute remarks or ideas to any individual without their express consent. The content is copyright of the Foundation Partners (DELWP, DJPR, Bureau of Meteorology), The Royal Society of Victoria, and *Science into Action*.