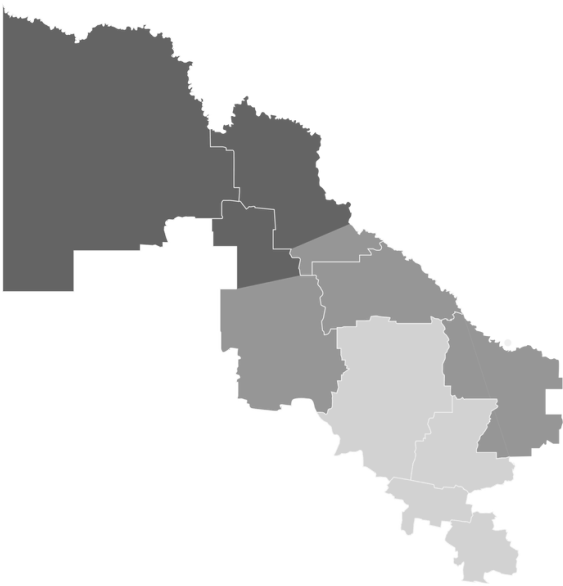




Loddon Mallee
Public Health Unit

CLIMATE CHANGE AND HEALTH

Loddon Mallee Public Health Unit
Priority 2023 - 2029



Produced by Bendigo Health,
Loddon Mallee Public Health Unit
Created on the 05 March 2025

Bendigo Health

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We acknowledge the First Peoples of Australia who are the Traditional Custodians of the land and water where we live, work and play. We celebrate that this is the oldest living and continuous culture in the world. We are proud to be sharing the land that we work on and recognise that sovereignty was never ceded.



We welcome all cultures, nationalities and religions. Being inclusive and providing equitable healthcare is our commitment

Why it is a priority

Climate change is interlinked with many other social determinants of health and amplifies existing inequalities. Tackling climate change and its impact on health is a key priority in the Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan. Climate change threatens health, wellbeing, and safety through extreme weather events like heatwaves, storms, floods, and bushfires.

Long-term effects include worsening air, water, and soil quality, shifts in disease patterns, food and water insecurity, threats to safety, economic impact and mental health challenges. These impacts disproportionately affect vulnerable populations, exacerbating systemic disadvantage.

The Loddon Mallee region is particularly vulnerable due to its geographical, social, and economic factors. Rising temperatures and extreme weather events are expected to increase waterborne, foodborne, and vector-borne diseases, worsen chronic illnesses, and reduce food nutrition. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities face unique risks but also provide leadership in climate adaptation through cultural knowledge and self-determination.

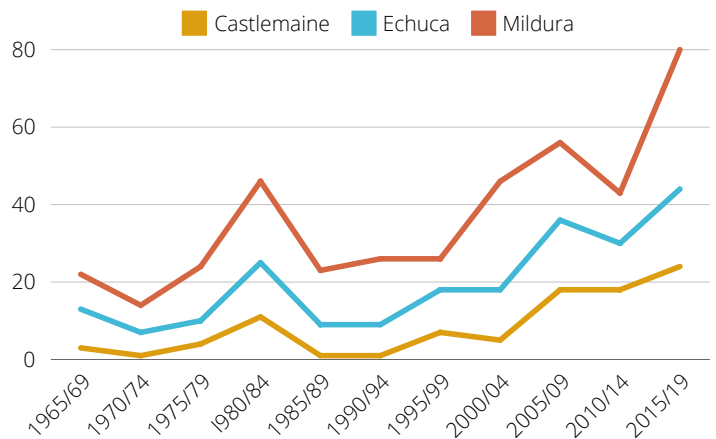
Working with our partners through a climate change informed approach, we seek to improve health and reduce inequality. Investments in renewable energy, energy-efficient housing, and sustainable food and transport can lower living costs, enhance air quality, and improve wellbeing. Other leverage points include building social capital for community resilience; creating knowledge networks; supporting organisations in climate risk assessment and mitigation.

The Loddon Mallee Climate Change and Health [Framework](#) supports cross-sector action to build climate resilience, benefiting both people and the environment.

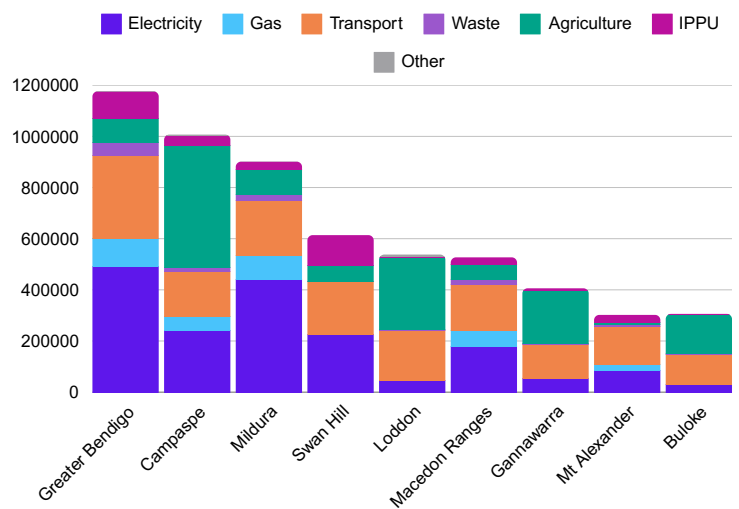
What the data told us

Heatwaves are the deadliest of extreme weather events experienced in Australia, resulting in increasing ambulance demand, hospital admissions and mortality.

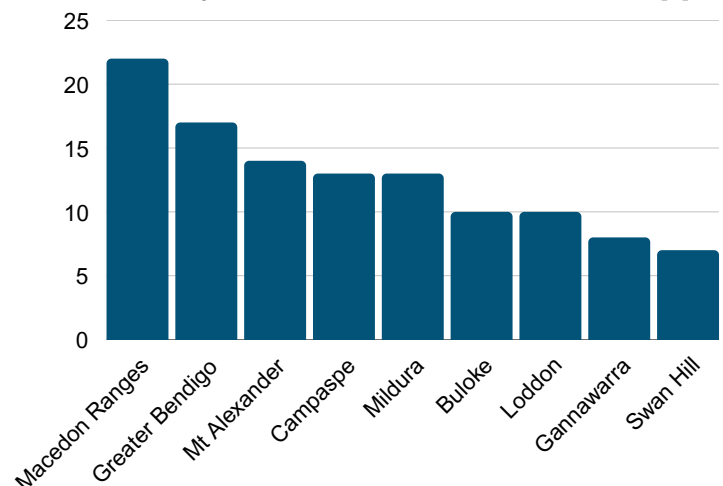
Number of days above 40°C (1965 -2019) [1]



Total carbon emissions (tCO2e), 2022 [2]



Number of climate emergencies that required government disaster recovery financial assistance, Jan 2007- 2024 [3]



[1] Bureau of Meteorology

[2] Snapshot Climate

[3] Disaster Assist, Australian Government

The work so far

Build climate change resilient communities and service system across the Loddon Mallee region

1. Structures are in place to enable collective cross sector action to build climate change resilience

- The Loddon Mallee Climate Change and Health Framework was developed in collaboration with a range of local stakeholders and experts to guide this work across the region.
- The LMPHU has established governance and structures to support collective cross sector action to build climate change resilience.
- A new collective action network of thirteen regional and state-based organisations has been established (Climate and Health Leaders Loddon Mallee).
- A Climate and Health collaboration with other local Public Health Units has been formed to strengthen our collective reach.

2. Raise awareness of how climate change impacts people's health and wellbeing and the co-benefits of climate change action and health outcomes

- There have been 20 stakeholder presentations to raise awareness of the impacts of the climate change on health including local government, health services, community services audiences.
- Communication tools developed and promoted including a [poster](#) and [flyer](#).
- Partnered with Bendigo Community Health Services to translate the Climate Change and Health flyer into [Karen](#) and [Dari](#) leading to planning for a new climate change program for new arrivals.
- Invited by Climate Change Victoria to review the *Tackling climate change and its impacts on health through municipal public health and wellbeing: guidance for local government, 2024*.
- Invited to provide advice to the National Adaptation Plan after attending the workshop.
- Attended the Bendigo Sustainability Festival and engaged in community conversations on climate change and health.

3. Build climate change mitigation and adaption within health services

- Supported seven health services with activities including climate change presentations, risk assessment templates, policy and action plan development and staff survey.
- A Community of Practice has been established in the Loddon sub-region to support hospitals in their climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- Supporting Bendigo Health to develop a sustainability and climate change strategy.
- Presented the *Loddon Mallee Climate Change and Health Framework at the National Greening Healthcare Forum (Climate and Health Alliance)*.
- Upskilling within the sector is planned via a health service training module which is in development.

Climate and Health Leaders Loddon Mallee

Arc Justice

Bendigo Community Health Services

Central Victorian Greenhouse Alliance

City of Greater Bendigo

Dept. of Energy, Environment & Climate Action

Echuca Regional Health

Greater Bendigo Climate Collaborative

Jesuit Social Services

Latrobe University

Murray Primary Health Network

North District Community Health

Sustainability Victoria

Womens Health Loddon Mallee

4. Explore cool space models suitable for implementation across the Loddon Mallee region

Cool spaces are structures to protect vulnerable populations and reduce the health risks associated with extreme heat.

- A Cool Spaces [resource](#) has been produced to support conversations and mapping within the sub-region stakeholder networks.
- The [Cool It Street Program](#) is creating cooler, healthier and greener neighbourhoods.
- The LMPHU is working to improve climate resilient homes through the promotion of the guide *Home upgrades for climate resilience* and workshops to improve home efficiencies. (click [here](#) for case study).
- Keeping cool in your home [flyer](#) developed and promoted.
- The LMPHU is scoping the level of interest of creating Cool Space models across the Loddon Mallee.
- Building capacity for household energy efficiency and literacy.
- In the Loddon sub-region, three more cool spaces are being developed: scoping extending opening hours and improving their accessibility and safety.

Climate Change and health [case-study](#)



5. Embed sustainability in regional and local initiatives that improve access to locally produced, fresh, healthy plant-based food

Refer to Healthy Food System [work](#).

Municipal public health and wellbeing planning 2025-2029

The Climate Change Act requires councils to have regard to climate change when preparing their municipal public health and wellbeing plans.

Tackling climate change and its impacts on health through municipal public health and wellbeing [planning](#) provides guidance for Councils to protect and improve the health and wellbeing of their communities through climate change action.

VicHealth has developed a module to support local government; [Supporting healthy and climate resilient communities](#). This includes actions and case studies on:

- building active communities
- building better food systems for healthier communities
- connected and supportive communities.

Other work

- Supported the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action's successful grant submission, Preparing Together Loddon Mallee: informed and inclusive disaster risk reduction action
- The LMPHU is partnering with La Trobe University to better understand priority populations perception and impact of climate change. Workshops have been held with three focus groups across the Loddon Mallee (click [here](#) for summary).
- The LMPHU now sits on the Victorian Council of Social Services' Health and Energy Nexus project working group



Click on picture below for more place-based activities



Loddon sub-regional update



Mallee sub-regional update



Murray sub-regional update

Stakeholder consultations

As part of the planning process for the LMPHU Population Health Plan 2025–29, stakeholders are invited to the Climate Change and Health Forum on 25 March 2025. This forum provides an opportunity for stakeholders to share their expertise and contribute to the development of the plan.

The key themes from the forum will be compiled and presented to the Primary Care and Population Health Advisory Sub-Committees and other stakeholders within each LMPHU sub-region by the respective Loddon, Mallee, and Murray teams, helping to shape sub-regional workplans.

Aligning our work

National Health and Climate [Strategy](#).

National Climate Resilience and Adaptation [Strategy](#) 2021-2025

Health and Human Services Climate Change Adaptation [Action Plan](#) 2022 – 2026

State of Sustainability [Report](#) 2024 | Sustainability Victoria

ACOSS Heat Survey [Report](#) 22024

Tackling the energy-health nexus, [VCOSS](#)

Turning 'wrong way' climate 'right way' Climate Change [Strategy](#) 2023-2034, Dja Dja Wurrang

[Resources – DJAARA \(Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation\)](#).

References/sources

1. Australian Medical Association (AMA), 2019. Climate change is a health emergency. <https://www.ama.com.au/media/climate-change-health-emergency>, accessed 27 Nov 2024.
2. Loddon Mallee Public Health Unit, Bendigo Health (2023). Loddon Mallee Climate Change and Health [Framework](#), accessed 27 Nov 2024.
3. National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIH) (2024). Human Health Impacts of Climate Change, accessed 13 Sept 2024.
4. Standen JC, Spencer J, Lee GW, et al. Aboriginal Population and Climate Change in Australia: Implications for Health and Adaptation Planning. *Int J Environ Res Public Health*. 2022 Jun 19;19(12):7502. doi: 10.3390/ijerph19127502. Erratum in: *Int J Environ Res Public Health*. 2022 Dec 07;19(24):16378. [45389_45389.pdf](#)
5. [UNICEF](#), Centre for Global Adaptation (2022). A call to action on climate and children, accessed 27 Nov 2024.
6. World Health Organisation, 2021, COP 26 special report on climate change and health: the health argument for climate action, [cop26-special-report.pdf](#), accessed 13 Sept 2024.

Other Resources: Climate Health Alliance (2021), Real, urgent & now communication the health impacts of climate change, [Comms guide - Climate Health](#)



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