

Media Release: Victoria Takes the Lead on Climate Change Adaptation

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Finding solutions to the impacts of climate change and helping Victorians adapt to its challenges will be the focus of a new \$5 million Brumby Labor Government climate change research centre.

Environment and Climate Change Minister Gavin Jennings said the Climate Change Adaptation Research Centre will be coordinated by Melbourne University and be a centre of excellence in developing solutions to the impact of climate change on Victorians.

“Climate change is a major issue facing the entire world and the Brumby Labor Government is taking action through funding this research centre to ensure Victorians and others around the globe can adapt to the challenges to ensure a sustainable future,” Mr Jennings said.

“We have committed \$5 million to the centre over the next five years, building on the substantial investments we have made in existing climate change programs. In addition to a sustainable environmental future, research into climate change adaptation will also result in jobs for Victorian families.”

The Climate Change Adaptation Research Centre will be co-ordinated by the University of Melbourne with initial member universities Monash University, La Trobe University and RMIT University.

“This is an exciting first for the universities currently involved and I look forward to extending membership opportunities to other Victorian universities which have the capacity to contribute to the climate change adaptation research effort,” Mr Jennings said.

“The new centre fosters a collaborative effort between the Brumby Labor Government and the Victorian university sector to undertake vital climate change adaptation research.

“I am pleased to announce the appointment of Professor Rod Keenan, former Head of Department of Forest and Ecosystem Science within the University of Melbourne, to the position of Director of the new centre.”

Professor Keenan said the centre aimed to bring together expertise from Victorian universities to identify future risks, reduce uncertainties and analyse options for adapting to climate change.

“Adapting to climate change does not mean we give up on efforts to reduce carbon emissions. However, it is likely that a certain amount of warming is already 'locked-in' to the climate system and adaptation means effectively responding to those unavoidable climate change impacts,” Professor Keenan said.

“We will work closely with the Government and communities to identify the challenges posed by climate change and undertake research to inform Government policy and community responses. It is an important new research field, both locally and globally.”

The research program for the centre will include annual forums to showcase research, a research grants program to complement the national adaptation effort, regional think tanks and a visiting fellowship program to draw on international expertise.

Media contact: Lyall Johnson on 9651 5799 or 0400 422 142 www.premier.vic.gov.au