

## Appendix 1: Useful information and resources

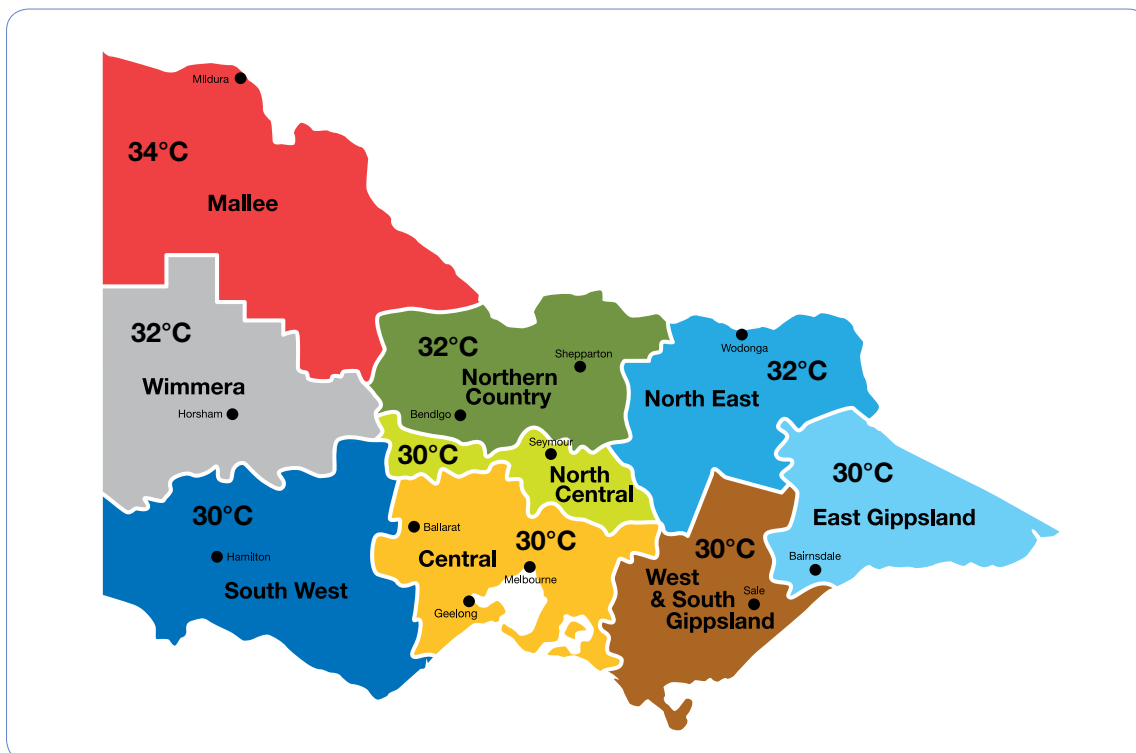
While we are generally accustomed to living in hot weather and are known to be resilient in hot conditions, rising temperatures and greater numbers of more intense periods of heat are forecast to be part of Victoria's climate.

In Victoria a heatwave is generally defined as a period of abnormally and uncomfortably hot weather that could impact on human health, community infrastructure and services. Clearly defining a heatwave is difficult, given factors such as humidity, demographics, urban or rural design issues and acclimatisation. These factors mean that similar temperatures may have a different impact in different environments or and different communities.

Studies have shown that heatwaves may be responsible for more deaths than other natural hazards experienced in Victoria. Heatwaves can affect anyone and certain circumstances and behaviour can make people more susceptible to heatwaves. There are also certain population groups that are known to be more at risk than others, including older people, people who have a medical condition and people taking medicine that affects the way the body reacts to heat.

In order to prepare the community for the impacts of extreme heat, the Department of Health has identified heat health temperature thresholds\* for the Bureau of Meteorology's weather forecast districts across Victoria. Once forecast average temperatures are predicted to exceed the health temperature threshold\* for a specific weather forecast district, the department will issue a Heat Health Alert for that district.

**Figure 1: Heat health temperature thresholds\* and corresponding weather forecast districts**



\* The heat health threshold is calculated as the average temperature from the forecast **daily maximum** (eg. Tuesday) and the forecast overnight temperature which is the **daily minimum for the following day** (eg. Wednesday).

The alert notifies a range of service providers of forecast heatwave conditions that are likely to impact on human health. High temperatures will be accompanied by the release of public health messages from Victoria's Chief Health Officer and agencies such as the Bureau of Meteorology and Ambulance Victoria, associated websites and public broadcasting systems.

When a heat health alert is issued, services are advised to monitor local conditions and take action according to their plans for dealing with heatwaves, operational protocols for service continuity and the health and safety of residents, staff and visitors.

Heatwaves rarely occur in isolation, and the impacts of some intense and prolonged heatwaves can cause an emergency situation. Infrastructure failure or other natural emergencies can add another level of demand on a community, particularly with health services such as ambulances and hospitals.

On days following extreme hot weather, services also need to consider the support and care required for continued effects of heat on residents and staff.

**In order to keep residents and staff healthy in the heat, residential aged care providers are responsible for having plans in place for:**

- preparing for summer and hot weather
- responding to a heat health alert
- when extreme heat becomes an emergency
- after extreme hot weather.

For useful information on heat health and being ready for a heatwave refer to:

[Bureau of Meteorology <www.bom.gov.au>](http://www.bom.gov.au)

[Department of Health – Ageing and Aged Care](#)

*Residential aged care services heatwave ready resource*

[<www.health.vic.gov.au/agedcare/publications/racsheatwave/index.htm>](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/agedcare/publications/racsheatwave/index.htm)

*SCORE Standardised care process – dehydration*

[<www.health.vic.gov.au/agedcare/downloads/score/score\\_dehydration\\_august\\_09.pdf>](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/agedcare/downloads/score/score_dehydration_august_09.pdf)

*Well for Life fact sheet 14: Drinking and fluids: maintaining hydration*

[<www.health.vic.gov.au/agedcare/publications/wellforlife>](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/agedcare/publications/wellforlife)

[Department of Health – Better Health Channel <www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au>](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au)

[Department of Health – Chief Health Officer <www.health.vic.gov.au/chiefhealthofficer>](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/chiefhealthofficer)

[Department of Health – Environmental Health](#)

Includes the heatwave plan for Victoria, community resources, heat health alert system

[<www.health.vic.gov.au/environment/heatwave>](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/environment/heatwave)

[Department of Health and Ageing](#)

Important reminder for aged care providers in heat wave conditions from the Senior Nurse Advisor

[<www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/32154654E5CDA2E4CA25768E00051CD0/\\$File/heatwaveres.pdf>](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/32154654E5CDA2E4CA25768E00051CD0/$File/heatwaveres.pdf)

[Continence Foundation of Australia](#)

Water for wellbeing. Promoting adequate fluid intake for the frail older person: a resource kit for HACC and residential aged care, 2008 [<www.continencevictoria.org.au/node/17>](http://www.continencevictoria.org.au/node/17)

[WorkSafe Victoria](#)

*Working in heat* [<www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/2c0293804071f64baf35ffe1fb554c40/guidance+working+in+heat3.pdf?MOD=AJPERES>](http://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/2c0293804071f64baf35ffe1fb554c40/guidance+working+in+heat3.pdf?MOD=AJPERES)