

Adapting to Climate Change



L5A4/p1

The little things are the big things!

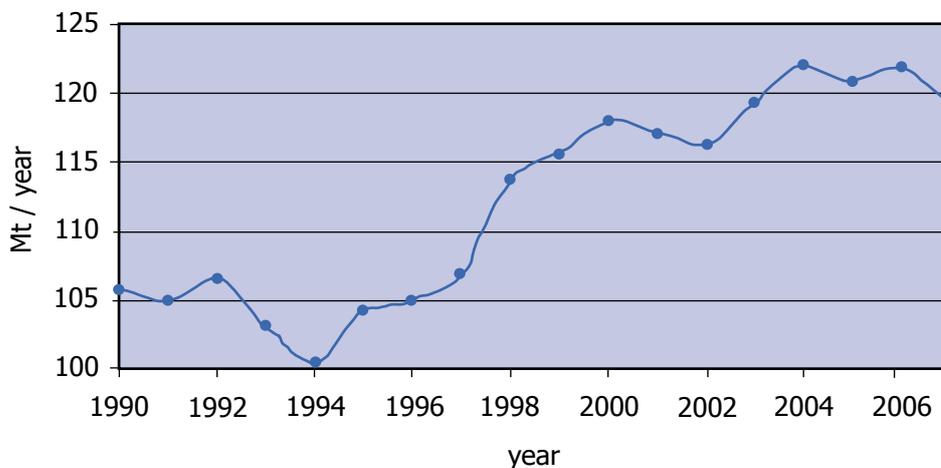
When you are unwell the doctor examines you to identify particular symptoms. Only then can your symptoms be treated appropriately so that you can recover and get on with life.

Our Earth is very much like our bodies. We have to take care of it so that it serves us well. Unfortunately there are clear symptoms that the Earth is unwell. Its rising temperature is a key symptom.

Australia is a wealthy country and Victorians share in that wealth. With a population of around five million people we are well served by thriving farming and industrial enterprise. But our wealth comes at a cost. And that cost is the health of the environment we live in. Current environmental data shows us that Victoria produces a great deal of greenhouse gases – more than some other industrialized nations with larger populations, such as Switzerland.



Figure 1 Trends in Victoria's total greenhouse gas emissions – 1990 to 2007



Legend: Mt – megatonne CO₂ Source: Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency

1. Describe the pattern of greenhouse gas emissions for Victoria from 1990 to 2007.



We know that about 20% or one-fifth of this volume of greenhouse gases is produced by Victorian households – including yours! It’s not that easy to see just what one person or one household contributes to the pool of greenhouse gases, because in reality, one household alone doesn’t make a big difference. But all of the little contributions made by every household together add up to a big volume of greenhouse gases.

- Five million people in Victoria alone.
- That’s a lot of people!
- That’s a big contribution to the greenhouse effect.



Let’s take a look at your family’s contribution. Visit the One Degree Carbon Calculator by clicking on the icon. You will need a copy of your home energy bills to get an accurate measure. Choose your State and then enter information that will form the basis of your own greenhouse gas inventory.

When you get to part 3, the ‘Carbon Footprint Results’ page, use the information to help answer the following questions.

When you get to part 5 ‘What Next’ enter your email address and a summary of your results and some ideas for possible changes will be emailed to you. Use this information to help with your answer to question 3.



2. Using your results:

- a.** What is the volume of your estimated total CO₂ emissions per year? _____

- b.** How does this compare to the typical Australian household? _____

- c.** Identify the activities that produce the greatest greenhouse emissions in your house. List these. _____

3. Small steps to make a big difference. Describe three different ways of doing things at home that mean a reduction in the greenhouse gases produced by your household. Next to each describe other benefits for your family from your changed action. Commit to these small changes.

