

THE CHARTER OF THE BUREAU OF METEOROLOGY

The Bureau of Meteorology is the National Meteorological Authority for Australia. The ultimate legal basis for its existence is the Commonwealth Constitution which, through its Section 51(viii), empowers the Federal Parliament to make laws for the peace, order and good government of the Commonwealth with respect to... 'meteorological observations'. The Bureau presently operates under the authority of the *Meteorology Act 1955* which provides the explicit legal basis and basic charter for its activities.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Bureau of Meteorology is to contribute to Australia's social, economic, cultural and environmental goals through the performance of the functions of a National Meteorological Service 'in the public interest generally and in particular:

- (a) for the purposes of the Defence Force;
- (b) for the purposes of navigation and shipping and of civil aviation; and
- (c) for the purpose of assisting persons and authorities engaged in primary production, industry, trade and commerce.'

MISSION

The overall mission of the Bureau is to observe and understand Australian weather and climate and provide meteorological, hydrological and oceanographic services in support of Australia's national needs and international obligations. This overall mission involves four separate basic missions:

- **Monitoring** Observation and data collection to meet the needs of future generations for reliable homogeneous national climatological data;
- **Research** Research directed to the advancement of meteorological science and the development of a comprehensive description and scientific understanding of Australia's weather and climate;
- **Services** Provision of meteorological and related data, information, forecast, warning, investigation and advisory services on a national basis; and
- **International** Coordination of Australia's involvement in international meteorology.

FUNCTIONS

The Meteorology Act defines the functions of the Bureau as:

- (a) the taking and recording of meteorological observations and other observations required for the purposes of meteorology;
- (b) the forecasting of weather and of the state of the atmosphere;

- (c) the issue of warnings of gales, storms and other weather conditions likely to endanger life or property, including weather conditions likely to give rise to floods or bushfires;
- (d) the supply of meteorological information;
- (e) the publication of meteorological reports and bulletins;
- (f) the promotion of the use of meteorological information;
- (g) the promotion of the advancement of meteorological science, by means of meteorological research and investigation or otherwise;
- (h) the furnishing of advice on meteorological matters; and
- (i) co-operation with the authority administering the meteorological service of any other country in relation to any of the matters specified in the preceding paragraphs.

POWERS

The Act confers on the Director of Meteorology such powers as are necessary to enable the Bureau to perform its statutory functions and in particular to:

- (a) establish meteorological offices and observing stations;
- (b) arrange with any Department, authority or person to take and record meteorological observations and transmit meteorological reports and information;
- (c) arrange means of communication for the transmission and reception of meteorological reports and information; and
- (d) arrange for the training of persons in meteorology.

SUPPORTING ACTIVITIES

Under the authority of the powers of the Director, the Bureau carries out a number of supporting activities as follows:

- (a) collection and dissemination of meteorological and related environmental data and products;
- (b) analysis and prognosis of meteorological and related environmental conditions;
- (c) archival of meteorological and related environmental data and products;
- (d) provision of automatic data processing facilities and support services;
- (e) provision of engineering support services;
- (f) training in meteorology and other fields related to the operations of the Bureau;
- (g) provision of public information and public education in meteorology;
- (h) operation of a National Meteorological Library and provision of other technical support services;
- (i) conduct of necessary supporting research and development;
- (j) coordination of information on Australian scientific and technical programs in meteorology;
- (k) establishment and maintenance of meteorological offices, observing stations and facilities and provision of accommodation for staff at remote locations; and
- (l) provision of necessary internal management support services.

CHARGES

Under Section 8 of the Meteorology Act, the Director may, subject to any directions of the Minister, make charges for the forecasts, information, advice, publications and other matter supplied in pursuance of the Act.