PUBLIC EDUCATION

Public education activities aim to:

- foster greater public understanding of weather and climate and to help the community use that information in their own and the national interest;
- inform the public and specific groups about the Bureau’s role and the services it offers, and to help those groups use the services most effectively; and
- help improve communications and morale within the Bureau by making known various Bureau activities.

The effectiveness of public education activities was assessed in terms of formal visits and attendances at external exhibitions and displays, distribution of a wide range of publications, and from public feedback via telephone, e-mail, post, internet access, media responses and visitor comments. The Bureau’s exhibition area at Head Office was closed during the move to 700 Collins St.

With the exhibition area closed during the relocation of the Bureau’s Head Office, the weather education program was continued at the Royal Botanic Gardens, with the cooperation of the staff there.


PUBLIC EDUCATION

**PUBLICATIONS**

- World Meteorological Day was held on 23 March. A media release, poster, display panels and a booklet were developed for Head Office and all regional offices on the theme, ‘Weather, Climate, Water and Sustainable Development’. Community awareness was also raised through the distribution of the World Meteorological Day poster, mainly to schools.

- The 2005 Australian Weather Calendar was again well received by the community and about 40,000 copies were distributed and sold. It, too, had the theme Weather, Climate, Water and Sustainable Development.

- A range of printed information, images and advice was provided to the mass media (radio, television and print), publishers, government agencies, commercial organisations, the general public and Bureau staff. Highlights included preparation of a 16-page *Canberra Times* weather supplement for schools; a display panel on Bureau scientific collaboration with Japan for a Questacon exhibit/website in Japan; Bureau-supported media coverage of the 30th anniversary of cyclone Tracy; the launch of the Bureau’s *Drought, Dust and Deluge, A Century of Climate Extremes in Australia*, which yielded national publicity, and heavy media support for the Australia/NZ Climate Forum.

- Material was prepared for the Bureau’s in-house journal *Weather News*, which contributes to internal communication among Bureau staff, including those in the most remote areas, with information on Bureau people and events, services issues and developments across Australia.

- The existing hard copy press clippings from major newspapers, items from the internet, transcripts and media alerts relevant to the Bureau were complemented by a version on the Bureau’s intranet. About 4200 pages of press clippings were collated and distributed.

**WEB-BASED INFORMATION**

- Nearly 200 media releases were placed on the Bureau website on issues such as climate change, new weather radars and weather satellites, major field office upgrades, automatic weather stations and observing systems for weather-balloon flights, forums involving the Bureau, such as the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics (ABARE) Outlook conference, and new services and forecasting systems. Regular releases on monthly weather summaries in each State, seasonal climate outlooks, drought statements and annual climate summaries were also placed on the website.

- About 500 images from the Bureau’s photographic collection were distributed to the media, staff, publishers, other government agencies, commercial organisations and the general public. More than 1200 digital images are available on the publicly accessible National Meteorological Library website. Donations of Weather Calendar entries have been particularly appreciated.
VISITS, TALKS AND MEDIA PRESENCE

- The World Meteorological Day address was given by Dr Wendy Craik, Chief Executive of the Murray-Darling Basin Commission on the theme Weather, Climate, Water and Sustainable Development.
- Regional Office staff participated in more than 30 agricultural shows, field days and similar external functions.
- Regional Office staff gave more than 180 talks to community and special interest groups (mainly schools, boating organisations, and community service clubs).
- Regional Offices hosted visits from more than 85 groups, predominantly schools.
- Direct media inquiries to the Public Affairs Unit at Head Office generally numbered one to five a week, and together with the direct media contact with regional offices and field offices resulted in extensive national media coverage of meteorological issues.
- Public Affairs is exploring educational partnerships with the Botanic Gardens and the Melbourne Zoo.