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## REVIEW BY THE DIRECTOR OF METEOROLOGY

### PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW

The Bureau successfully met the challenges of providing meteorological and related services for the community, including for a number of significant events that occurred during the year. The ongoing drought in eastern Australia finally showed signs of easing in some areas during Autumn 2005. Major severe thunderstorm outbreaks occurred in south-west Western Australia and southeast Queensland and there was an unprecedented heavy rainfall event over a large part of southeastern Australia in February that broke many records. Tropical cyclone *Ingrid* was one of the most intense cyclones on record and impacted Queensland, the Northern Territory and Western Australia during its exceptionally long lifetime. Although the Bureau-operated Australian Tsunami Alert System (ATAS) performed successfully during the devastating tsunami event that struck Indian Ocean countries on Boxing Day 2004, opportunities for improvements in infrastructure and service delivery were highlighted that will be pursued through the Government's Australian Tsunami Warning System initiative, funded through the 2005-06 Budget.

#### **Some other notable achievements included:**

- the Bureau's relocation of its headquarters from the Melbourne CBD to new accommodation at 700 Collins Street in the Docklands. The move was achieved smoothly and without interruption to the Bureau's around-the-clock operations;
- the installation of several new radar facilities as part of the Radar Network and Doppler Services Upgrade Project;
- the relocation of the newly formed National Tidal Centre from Flinders University to the South Australia Regional Office in Adelaide;
- upgraded thunderstorm warning services, including the launch of new, graphical severe thunderstorm warning products;
- the continuing growth in demand for information and services through the Bureau's web site. It is the most heavily-accessed government website in the country and received more than five billion hits in 2004-05; and
- improved techniques to support accurate weather forecasting, including state-of-the-art temperature and thunderstorm forecasting techniques that make best use of numerical weather prediction models.

The Bureau's performance exceeded many of the performance targets identified in the 2004-05 Portfolio Budget Statements. These targets will need to be revised in future to stretch the Bureau's performance and promote continuous improvement.

## SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

Many challenges continued to face the Bureau of Meteorology in 2004-05, including:

- maintaining its operations during the relocation of the Head Office and Victorian Regional Office;
- establishing continuing efficiencies to enable the provision of enhanced, user-targeted products and services;
- ensuring the availability and delivery of climate-related information that directly meets the needs of agriculturalists, water resource managers and policy makers; and
- achieving an effective balance between automated and manual observations programs to ensure that the needs of the Bureau and the community for meteorological data are met in the most cost-effective manner.

## FINANCIAL RESULTS

The only new measure in 2004-05 directly affecting the funding of the Bureau of Meteorology was the provision of \$3.480m over four years commencing in 2004-05, and \$0.570m per annum ongoing, to fund the operations of the National Tidal Centre within the Bureau of Meteorology.

Further information on the financial performance of the Bureau of Meteorology is available in the financial statements, commencing on page 125 of this report.

## OUTLOOK FOR 2005-06

The Bureau of Meteorology will continue to provide high quality weather and related forecasts to the Australian community as its highest priority. Associated with this there will be a number of on-going and new activities, including:

- establishment of the Australian Tsunami Warning System in collaboration with Emergency Management Australia and Geoscience Australia;
- operational introduction of new Doppler radar facilities in Adelaide and Brisbane and associated services;
- implementation of the Bureau's enhanced field office replacement program, commencing with Willis Island;
- the commissioning of new equipment including radars, automatic weather stations, and wind profilers;
- involvement in the Australian Community Climate and Earth System Simulator (ACCESS) with CSIRO, the Australian Greenhouse Office and scientists from other institutions; and
- introduction of a new payroll and human resource management system.