

# FOREWORD

Climatic contrast and extremes are a fact of life across the vast land mass that is Australia. The impact of climatic variability on the national economy is the greatest single influence beyond the state of the global economy. Understanding and managing the risks associated with changes in our climate is therefore vitally important. Australia has an impressive depth of experience in climate monitoring and research and is using that understanding to advance our market goals. But perhaps more importantly, climate is a global science and Australia has been a proud international contributor and beneficiary for many decades.

Australia's contribution to the global climate science effort is largely effected through participation in international climate science programs, such as the World Meteorological Organization led World Climate Programme and the Global Climate Observing System. We have paid particular attention to the need to promote balanced consideration of the southern hemisphere and south-west Pacific aspects of climate in international scientific programs and assessments. Recognising the need for balanced scientific advice to policymakers, Australian scientists are preparing to contribute to the development and substance of the Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change's Fourth Assessment Report.

In 1993, the Bureau of Meteorology, which carries the main national responsibility for climate monitoring, research and service provision, initiated this series of biennial reports on Australian participation in international scientific climate programs. This report, *Climate Activities in Australia 2003*, is the sixth in the series and provides a comprehensive overview of the activities and achievements since the last report. This latest report, like its predecessors, focuses primarily on activities that support the objectives of the World Climate Programme and the four key thrusts of the international Climate Agenda:

- new frontiers in climate science and prediction;
- climate services for sustainable development;
- dedicated observations of the climate system; and
- studies of climate impact assessments and response strategies to reduce vulnerabilities.

In preparing this report, the Bureau of Meteorology gratefully received cooperation from many agencies and institutions throughout Australia with interests in climate matters. I am especially appreciative for the valuable contributions from the Bureau, the Australian Greenhouse Office and the Australian Academy of Science's National Committee for Earth System Science, along with others in academia, industry and government.



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