



ANTARCTIC CLIMATE
& ECOSYSTEMS CRC

Antarctic Climate & Ecosystems Cooperative Research Centre

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New research projects an increase in Tasmania's extreme weather events

Tasmanians can expect to see an increase in intense rainfall events as well as more hot days and warm nights as the climate changes throughout this century.

These are some of the findings contained the Climates Futures for Tasmania Technical Report on Extreme Events released in Hobart today.

The report was launched by the Minister for Police and Emergency Management, David O'Byrne, and the Minister for Climate Change, Cassy O'Connor.

The impacts of climate change on extreme weather events in Tasmania will vary depending on the region. The projections in the report are made at a highly localised scale.

The lead author of the report, Dr Chris White, said the nature of extreme rainfall events across Tasmania would change.

"Extremely wet days will increase in the south-west and north-east, averaging up to seven days per year, which is about a 25 per cent increase," Dr White said. However the number of rainy days across the State is expected to decrease, with the greatest decrease in the north-west of the State. "This means that some regions can expect longer, drier periods interspersed with more extreme rainfall events."

The largest increases in the amount of rain falling in extreme events will be in areas where the most variable and intense rain is already observed. For example in St Helens, by 2085, what is now a 1-in-200 year event is projected to become a 1-in-20 year event.

Dr White said hot summer days and heat waves would become more frequent. "The number of summer days (warmer than 25 degrees C) is projected to double or triple in some regions," he said. "Some areas of Tasmania will see 40 additional summer days per year by the end of the century."

Tropical nights (minimum temperature greater than 20 degrees C) will increase from almost none to up to 20 per year, mainly in the northern coastal regions and on Flinders Island.

The CEO of the ACE CRC, Dr Tony Press, said the research could play a crucial role in emergency management. "Research like this can play a vital part in helping Tasmanian communities be prepared for extreme events. It gives them a greater understanding of how climate change will impact on their town and in their lives," Dr Press said.

The Climate Futures for Tasmania project is the Tasmanian Government's most important source of climate change information at a local scale.

Led by Professor Nathan Bindoff, the project downscaled global climate models to a 10-kilometre grid across Tasmania to generate projections out to the end of this century. The Extreme Events Technical Report is the fifth from the Climate Futures for Tasmania project, which is hosted by the ACE CRC, based at the University of Tasmania. Previous reports have been into General Climate Impacts, Water and Catchments, Impacts on Agriculture and Climate Modelling.

For interview today:

ACE CRC CEO Dr Tony Press: at the launch, 0419 399 009

Lead author Dr Chris White: 0416 276 556

Researcher Dr Michael Grose: at the launch, 03 6226-1749

The technical report and summary will be available for the media today at the launch.

They can be downloaded at

http://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/divisions/climatechange/adapting/climate_futures

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