

Key points

Extreme heat kills more Australians than any other form of natural disaster. People experiencing disadvantage are the most impacted.

For some people a heatwave means blasting an air-conditioner all day or taking a dip at the local pool. But for others it means physical sickness, mental illness, financial hardship, family violence, social isolation and being cut off from essential services. People are more vulnerable to heat if they:

- Are young or older
- Can't afford air-conditioning or a car
- Don't speak English
- Live in a rental home or public housing
- Are sleeping rough (homeless)
- Are pregnant or experiencing family violence
- Work outside or have an insecure job
- Have a disability or health condition

Number crunching



More than 600 Victorians were treated in hospital due to the 2014 heatwave.



The number of 'very hot days' in Victoria is on track to double by 2050.



There's no official data on how many Victorians are killed by extreme heat each year.

The community sector steps up

Community services organisations are instrumental in helping people cope and keep cool during extreme heat. They open up air-conditioned offices for people to shelter, call vulnerable clients to check on their welfare, and provide advice to clients about thermal comfort and energy usage, and more. Organisations are rarely funded to do this critical work.

What should be done?

- 1 Upgrade housing quality and roll-out affordable air-conditioning.**
- 2 Provide communities with cool public places to shelter, and a lot more parks and trees.**
- 3 Measure heat-related illness and deaths so we know who is harmed and where they live.**

In their words



"My air-con was really great. But no-one told me the electricity bill would be astronomical. You're damned if you do, damned if you don't."

"Heat affects me health-wise. I get sick every single summer. Sick to the stomach. If it gets too hot, I feel like I need to throw up."