

1 Geography and Government



GEOGRAPHY

Geographic position and area

The most southerly point of Wilsons Promontory, latitude 39° 08' S., longitude 146° 22' 30" E., is the southernmost point of the mainland of Victoria and similarly of the mainland of Australia; the northernmost point is where the western boundary of the State meets the Murray River, latitude 33° 59' S., longitude 140° 58' E; the point furthest east is Cape Howe, situated in latitude 37° 31' S., longitude 149° 58' E. The westerly boundary lies upon the meridian 140° 58' E., and extends from latitude 33° 59' S. to latitude 38° 04' S., a distance of 451 kilometres.

Victoria covers an area of about 227,600 square kilometres. It is therefore slightly smaller than Great Britain which (if inland water is included) contains 229,900 square kilometres.

TABLE 1.1 AREA OF STATES AND TERRITORIES

State or Territory	Area in square kilometres	Length of coastline in kilometres	Percentage of total area
Western Australia	2,525,500	12,500	32.88
Queensland	1,727,200	7,400	22.48
Northern Territory	1,346,200	6,200	17.52
South Australia	984,000	3,700	12.81
New South Wales	801,600	1,900	10.44
Victoria	227,600	1,800	2.96
Tasmania	67,800	3,200	0.88
Australian Capital Territory	2,400	35	0.03
Australia	7,682,300	36,735	100.00

Coastline

The Victorian coastline comprises many types of environments. Broad sandy beaches and impressive cliffed headlands along the ocean coast contrast with mangrove-fringed mudflats and marshland of the sheltered embayments and estuaries. There are approximately 1,300 kilometres of ocean coast between Cape Howe and the South Australian border; in addition three large embayments - Port Phillip Bay (270 kilometres), Western Port Bay (150 kilometres), and Corner Inlet (80 kilometres) - partially enclose protected waters where most of the ports and harbours are situated.

Physical divisions

The chief physical divisions of Victoria are shown on page 27. Each of these divisions has certain physical features (elevation, geological structure, climate, and soils) which distinguish it from the others.

1. Murray Basin Plains:
 - (a) The Mallee
 - (b) The Riverine Plains
 - (c) The Wimmera
2. Central Highlands:
 - A. The Eastern Highlands
 - B. The Western Highlands:
 - (a) The Midlands
 - (b) The Grampians
 - (c) The Dundas Tablelands
3. Western District Plains:
 - (a) The Volcanic Plains
 - (b) The Coastal Plains
4. Gippsland Plains:
 - (a) The East Gippsland Plains
 - (b) The West Gippsland Plains
5. Southern Uplands:
 - (a) The Otway Ranges
 - (b) The Barrabool Hills
 - (c) The Mornington Peninsula
 - (d) The South Gippsland Highlands
 - (e) Wilsons Promontory

The following table lists Victoria's highest mountains:

TABLE 1.2 HEIGHT OF SELECTED MOUNTAINS, VICTORIA
(metres)

<i>Mountain</i>	<i>Height</i>	<i>Mountain</i>	<i>Height</i>
Bogong	1,986	Niggerhead	1,843
Feathertop	1,922	Mckay	1,843
Nelse North	1,883	Cobberas No. 1	1,838
Fainter South	1,877	Cope	1,837
Loch	1,874	Spion Kopje	1,836
Hotham	1,861	Buller	1,804

ABS STATISTICAL GEOGRAPHY

Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC)

The statistical division structure of Victoria was formed in 1974 by combining legal local government areas into socio-economic zones.

Since January 1986, ABS statistical geography has been based on the Australian Standard Geographic Classification (ASGC). The current ASGC was implemented in January 1991, following extensive review designed to accommodate future population growth, especially in the Melbourne Statistical Division (MSD). The previous review occurred in the mid-1960's.

The ASGC is an hierarchical structure designed to cover the whole of Australia, without omission or overlap. Within Victoria's statistical division structure there are 12 statistical divisions, 50 sub-divisions, 238 statistical local areas (SLA), and 7,501 collection districts (CD). The ASGC also contains 14 labour force regions, of which 9 are in the MSD and 5 are in the Rest of Victoria (ROV). Labour Force regions are used extensively for ABS social surveys, including the Labour Force Survey. Victoria also has 7 statistical districts, which are urban areas outside the MSD, and whose populations exceed 25,000. The smallest geographic unit normally used in ABS published material is the SLA. Special data runs and electronic products like 4-Site can utilise CD level data.

In order to meet census collector requirements, approximately 20 per cent of CDs changed between 1986 and 1991. A total of 14 SLAs (1986) changed status in January 1991 either through splitting or recombining. The SLA structure in Victoria (238 SLAs) is largely equivalent to that for LGAs (210 LGAs), although 22 LGAs are split and 5 SLAs cover unincorporated areas.

The ASGC is being increasingly used by government agencies and other organisations to allow geographic comparability. The SLA/LGA unit is usually the key when looking for concordance across government department regions which differ from the ASGC.

CLIMATE

General conditions

The major topographical determinant of the climate is the Great Dividing Range, running east-west across the State, and rising to nearly 2,000 metres in the eastern half. This acts as a barrier to the moist south-east and south-west winds and together with its proximity to the coast, causes the south of the State to receive more rain than the north.

To the south of Victoria, except for Tasmania and its islands, there is no land for 3,000 kilometres. This vast area of ocean has a moderating influence on Victoria's climate in winter. Snow, which is a common winter occurrence at similar latitudes on the eastern seaboard of the great land masses of the northern hemisphere, is rare in Victoria below elevations of 600 metres. To the north of Victoria, the land mass of Australia becomes very hot in the summer, and on several days at this time of year the temperature over the State may rise to between 35°C and 40°C, often with a strong northerly wind.

Climate in Melbourne

The proximity of Port Phillip Bay bears a direct influence on the climate of the metropolitan area. The hottest months in Melbourne are normally January and February, when the average maximum temperature is 26°C. Inland, Watsonia has an average of 27°C, while along the Bay, Aspendale and Black Rock, subject to any sea breeze, have an average of 25°C. This difference does not persist throughout the year, however, and in July average maxima at most stations are within 1°C of one another at approximately 13°C. The hottest day on record in Melbourne was 13 January 1939, when the temperature reached 45.6°C. This is the second highest temperature ever recorded in an Australian capital city. In Melbourne, the average number of days per year with maxima over 35°C is about nine, but there were twenty-five in the summer of 1897-98 and there has been only one year with no occurrence, namely 1984. The average annual number of days over 30°C is approximately twenty-nine.

Nights are coldest at places a considerable distance from the sea, and away from the city where heat retention by buildings, roads, and pavements may maintain the air at a slightly higher temperature. The lowest temperature ever recorded in the city was -2.8°C on 21 July 1869, and the highest minimum ever recorded was 30.6°C on 1 February 1902.

In Melbourne the overnight temperature remains above 20°C on about four nights per year. During the early years of record, temperatures below 0°C were recorded during most winters. However, over more recent years, the urban 'heat island' effect has resulted in such low temperatures occurring only once in two years on average. Minima below -1°C have been experienced during the months of May to August, while even as late as October extremes have been down to 0°C. During the summer, minima have never been below 4°C.

Wide variations in the frequencies of occurrences of low air temperatures are noted across the Melbourne metropolitan area. For example, there are approximately ten annual occurrences of 2°C or less around the Bay, but frequencies increase to over twenty in the outer suburbs and probably to over thirty a year in the more frost susceptible areas. The average frost-free period is about 200 days in the outer northern and eastern suburbs, gradually increasing to over 250 days towards the city, and approaching 300 days along parts of the bayside.

The means of the climatic elements for the seasons in Melbourne, computed from all available official records, are given in Table 1.3.

Rainfall

The average annual number of days of rain (0.2mm or more in 24 hours) is over 150 on the West Coast and in West Gippsland, and exceeds 200 over the Otway Ranges. The average number of wet days a year is reduced to 100 at a distance of approximately 160 kilometres inland from the coast. The distribution of rainfall in Victoria by districts is given in Table 1.4.

Distribution of average rainfall in Victoria is shown in Figure 3 on page 30. Average rainfall ranges from 250mm for the driest parts of the Mallee to 2,600mm at Falls Creek in the Alps.

TABLE 1.3 MEANS OF CLIMATIC ELEMENTS, MELBOURNE

Meteorological element	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
Mean atmospheric pressure (hectopascals)	1,015.0	1,013.2	1,018.4	1,018.5
Mean maximum temperature of air in shade (°C)	19.5	25.1	20.2	14.0
Mean minimum temperature of air in shade (°C)	9.4	13.7	10.7	6.3
Mean relative humidity at 9 a.m. (per cent, saturation = 100)	64	61	72	79
Mean rainfall (mm)	186	154	168	149
Mean number of days of rain	40	25	34	44
Mean amount of evaporation (mm) (a)	359	564	276	138
Mean daily amount of cloudiness (scale 0 to 8) (b)	4.9	4.2	4.8	5.2
Mean daily hours of sunshine (c)	6.6	8.4	5.6	4.5
Mean number of days of fog	1.4	0.6	5.8	10.3

(a) Measured by Class A Pan (records commenced 1967).

(b) Scale: 0 = clear, 8 = overcast.

(c) Measured at Laverton (records commenced 1968).

TABLE 1.4 RAINFALL IN DISTRICTS, VICTORIA
(mm)

District	Year						Average (a)
	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	
North Mallee	270	357	316	348	358	273	309
South Mallee	316	414	378	408	429	294	355
North Wimmera	391	415	400	441	431	313	411
South Wimmera	440	616	547	630	568	460	504
Lower North	400	420	364	537	519	376	431
Upper North	492	516	452	634	613	437	516
Lower Northeast	769	910	688	954	927	925	782
Upper Northeast	1,023	1,289	1,068	1,341	1,334	1,237	1,107
East Gippsland	1,062	576	639	868	910	862	776
West Gippsland	953	959	828	982	999	975	915
East Central	892	965	859	931	1,094	923	891
West Central	646	611	690	635	741	675	613
North Central	751	858	815	920	932	782	727
Western Plains	612	659	634	592	641	622	629
West Coast	814	849	724	760	858	854	775

(a) Average for 78 years 1913 to 1990.

AVERAGE ANNUAL RAINFALL

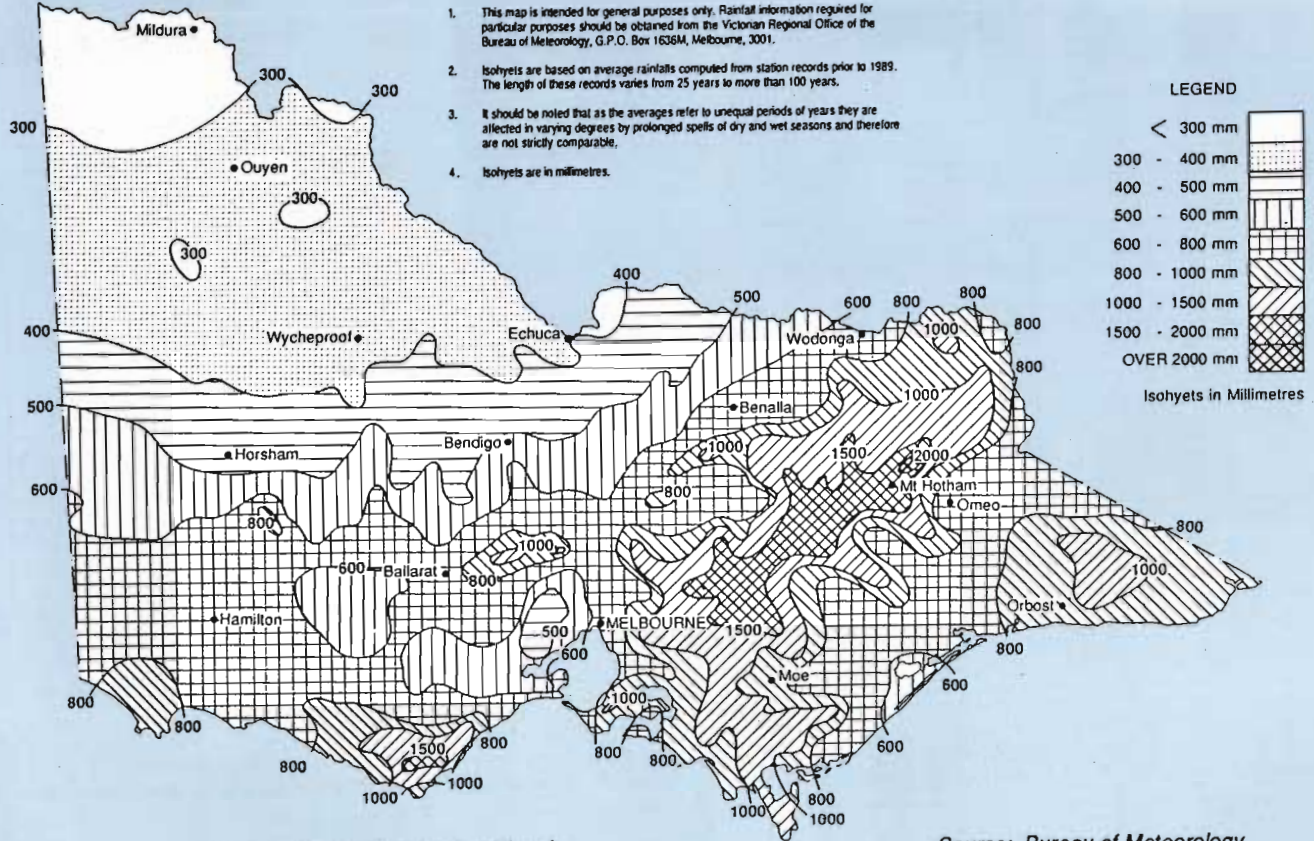


Figure 3. Average annual rainfall of Victoria

Source: Bureau of Meteorology

GOVERNMENT

The system of government in Victoria provides for responsible Cabinet government based on a legislature of two Houses, the Legislative Assembly (Lower House) and the Legislative Council (Upper House), both elected by Australian citizens over the age of 18. Voting is compulsory.

The Constitution

From 1855 until 1975, the Constitution of Victoria was contained in the Schedule to an Act of the United Kingdom in 1855, but Victoria finally adopted a Constitution of its own with the *Constitution Act 1975*.

Under the Victorian Constitution, the ultimate executive power is vested in the Crown, and is exercised by the Governor as the Monarch's representative. The Governor is the titular head of the government, while the Premier is the effective head of government. Further information on the powers and function of the Governor may be found on page 60 of the *Victorian Year Book 1986*.

The Constitution is affected by the Commonwealth Constitution enacted by the *Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act 1900*, an act of the Imperial Parliament, by which legislative and executive powers upon certain specified matters were granted to the Commonwealth Parliament and the Commonwealth Government, some of them exclusively, and provision was made that, in case of inconsistency of valid laws, the Commonwealth law should prevail.

Victorian Government responsibilities

The Victorian Government is responsible for such things as health, education, law enforcement, administration of justice, the control of resources, and the provision of roads, water, sewerage, power, and other services. Under Victorian law a complete system of courts, a police force, a teaching service, and many statutory bodies have been established.

Victorian government departments and statutory authorities

Victorian government departments and statutory authorities administer legislation, implement government policy, provide policy advice to government, and supply goods and services to the people of Victoria.

Information concerning Victorian government departments and statutory authorities may be found in previous editions of the *Victorian Year Book*. More recent information may be found in the *Victorian Government Directory*, which is compiled by Information Victoria - Ministry of Ethnic, Municipal and Community Affairs.

Victorian representation in the Commonwealth Parliament

The federation of the Australian colonies formally commenced on 1 January 1901. The House of Representatives was seen as representing the people and directly chosen by the people for a maximum three year term on single Member constituencies. The Senate was seen as representing the rights of the States, and Senators are appointed for a six year term with half of them retiring every three years. Senators are chosen directly by the people on a single State wide electorate and on a proportional representation system.

Since the 1989 electoral redistribution Victoria has had 38 members in the House of Representatives, and 12 Senators.

TABLE 1.5 ELECTORS ON JOINT ROLLS, VICTORIA, 30 JUNE

<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of electors enrolled</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of electors enrolled</i>
1986	2,601,091	1989	2,773,200
1987	2,702,932	1990	2,805,773
1988	2,680,181	1991	2,835,591

Source: Australian Electoral Commission

Ministry

A simultaneous election for the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly of the Victorian Parliament was held on 1 October 1988. The Australian Labour Party, under the leadership of the Hon. John Cain, was elected to office.

On 10 August 1990, following Mr Cain's resignation, the Hon. Joan Kirner became the first female Premier of Victoria. Her first Ministry, and Victoria's 66th, was reshuffled in January 1991. A further reshuffle took place in January 1992. The Ministry consisted of the following members as at 1 February 1992.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

The Hon. Joan Kirner	Premier and Minister responsible for Women's Affairs
The Hon. Jim Kennan	Deputy Premier, Attorney-General, Minister for the Arts and Minister for Major Projects
The Hon. Ian Baker	Minister for Food and Agriculture
The Hon. Steve Crabb	Minister for Tourism and Minister for Water Resources
The Hon. Andrew McCutcheon	Minister for Planning and Housing
The Hon. Neil Pope	Minister for Labour and Minister for School Education
The Hon. Tom Roper	Minister for Employment, Post-Secondary Education and Training; Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Minister responsible for Gaming
The Hon. John Harrowfield	Minister for Finance and Minister assisting in Labour with responsibility for Workcare
The Hon. Mal Sandon	Minister for Police and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrections
The Hon. Kay Setches	Minister for Community Services and Minister responsible for Child Care
The Hon. Tony Sheehan	Treasurer
The Hon. Peter Spyker	Minister for Transport
The Hon. Neil Trezise	Minister for Sport and Recreation

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

The Hon. David White	Minister for Manufacturing and Industry Development and Minister responsible for Ports
The Hon. Caroline Hogg	Minister for Ethnic, Municipal and Community Affairs
The Hon. Maureen Lyster	Minister for Health
The Hon. Theo Theophanous	Minister for Small Business; Minister for Consumer Affairs and Minister assisting in Manufacturing and Industry Development, with responsibility for Corporatisation
The Hon. Barry Pullen	Minister for Conservation and Environment

MINISTRIES, VICTORIA 1943 TO 1990 (a)

<i>Ministry and name of Premier</i>	<i>Date of assumption of office</i>	<i>Date of retirement from office</i>	<i>Duration of office (days)</i>
Albert Arthur Dunstan	18 September 1943	2 October 1945	746
Ian Macfarlan, K.C.	2 October 1945	21 November 1945	51
John Cain	21 November 1945	20 November 1947	730
Thomas Tuke Hollway	20 November 1947	3 December 1948	380
Thomas Tuke Hollway	3 December 1948	27 June 1950	572
John Gladstone Black McDonald	27 June 1950	28 October 1952	855
Thomas Tuke Hollway	28 October 1952	31 October 1952	3
John Gladstone Black McDonald	31 October 1952	17 December 1952	48
John Cain	17 December 1952	31 March 1955	835
John Cain	31 March 1955	7 June 1955	69
Henry Edward Bolte, G.C.M.G.	7 June 1955	23 August 1972	6,288
Rupert James Hamer, E.D.	23 August 1972	5 June 1981	3,209
Lindsay Hamilton			
Simpson Thompson, C.M.G.	5 June 1981	8 April 1982	299
John Cain (b)	8 April 1982	10 August 1990	3,046
Joan Elizabeth Kirner	10 August 1990	still in office	

(a) A complete list since responsible government in 1855 can be found on pages 741-2 of the *Victorian Year Book 1984*.

(b) The Hon. John Cain is the son of the Hon. John Cain who held the office of Premier on three occasions between 1945 and 1955.

Local government administration

For Local Government purposes, Victoria is divided into 210 municipal districts and the Yallourn Works Area, which was separated from the municipal districts of which it had formed a part by the *State Electricity Commission (Yallourn Area) Act 1947*. For certain purposes it is deemed to be a borough and municipal administration is the responsibility of the Commission, assisted by an Advisory Council. The 210 municipalities comprise 68 cities, 1 rural city, 5 towns, 6 boroughs, and 130 shires.

The only unincorporated areas of Victoria are French Island (154 square kilometres) in Western Port, Lady Julia Percy Island (1.3 square kilometres) off Port Fairy, Bass Strait islands (3.8 square kilometres), Gippsland Lakes (part) (309 square kilometres), and Tower Hill Lake Reserve (5.0 square kilometres) which is within the Shire of Warrambol.

Councils may make by-laws on a number of specified subjects. They exercise functions relating to roads and bridges, for which they have a construction and maintenance responsibility; drainage, water supply and sewerage; building control; community welfare, including infant and pre-school centres, home help, elderly citizens, meals-on-wheels and garbage; parking areas and traffic engineering.

TABLE 1.6 RATEABLE PROPERTIES, VICTORIA, 30 SEPTEMBER

<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of rateable properties</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of rateable properties</i>
1985	1,746,443	1988	1,832,255
1986	1,782,130	1989	1,862,832
1987	1,803,015	1990	1,915,037

REFERENCES

ABS publications

Statistical Maps, Victoria (1103.2)

Melbourne Statistical Division Map (1104.2)

Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) (1216.0)