

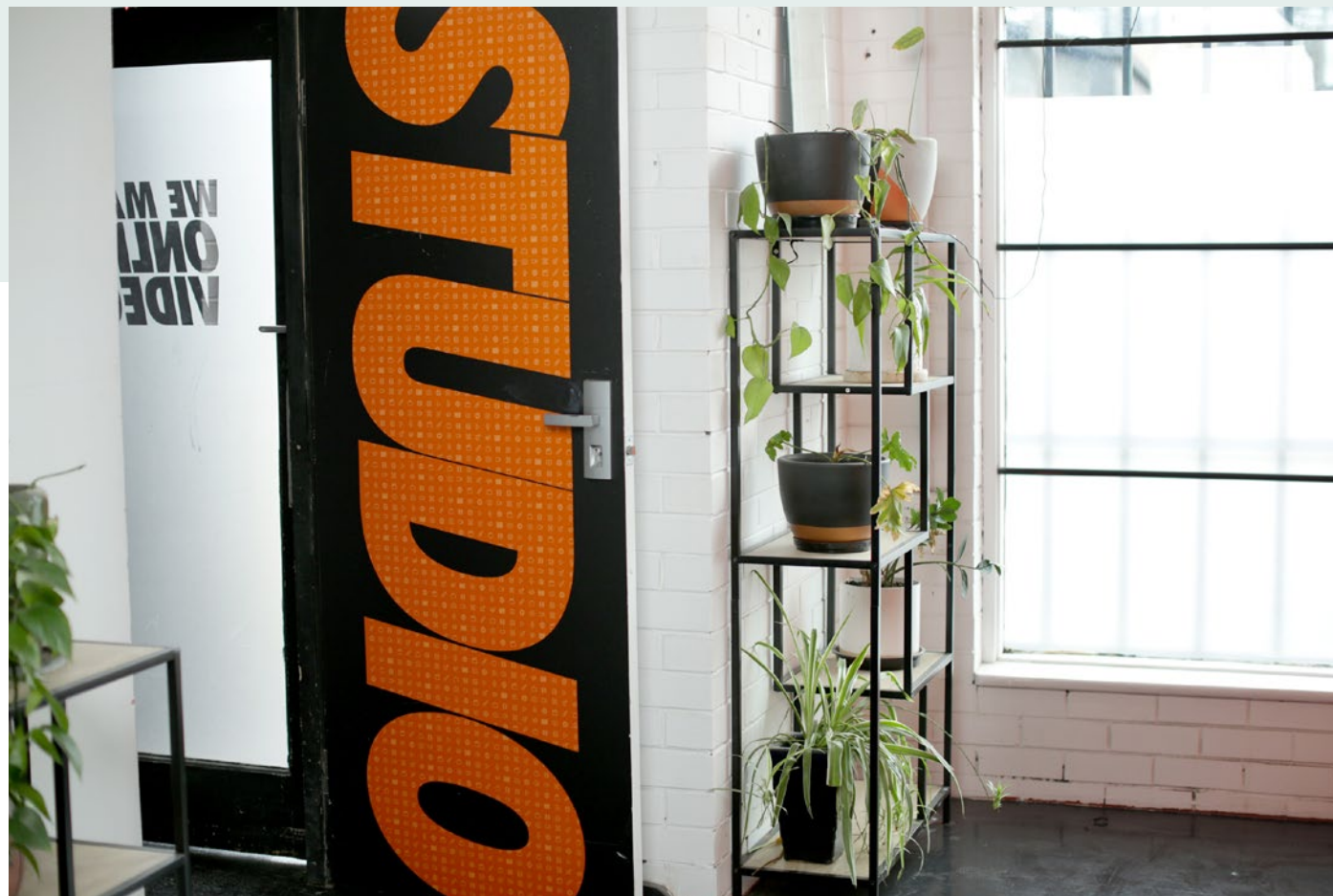
CLIMATE ADAPTATION TOOLKIT

SECTOR CASE STUDY: PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

The professional services sector includes scientists, accountants, advertising and marketing specialists, lawyers and solicitors, vets, management and other consultants, photographers, architects, engineers, computer system designers, designers, and creative studios (e.g. art, video, design, computing).

There are many thousands of these businesses operating in town centres, main street shops and shopping centres throughout the councils participating in the South East Councils Climate Change Alliance (SECCCA).

The value to the SECCCA region from all these small operations is hard to calculate but is likely greater than \$5.2 billion annually.



The creative and cultural industries sector alone in the City of Port Phillip is worth \$2.3 billion annually and is their second largest industry. While office-based professional services may be less impacted than other sectors by climate change, people working in this area need to consider climate resilience.

ADAPTATION PLANNING

Adaptation planning for the professional services sector involves making three relevant locations climate resilient: the office, home office and any offsite locations. The small business climate resilience process can guide adaptation (see Figure 1).

Based on interviews with businesses across different sectors in the SECCCA region, the professional service sector's climate adaptation goal is to avoid shutting down for significant periods of time and minimise any recovery costs.

Options for adapting food manufacturing businesses include:

- making the office resilient to extreme weather
- considering relocating to a climate-resilient site
- planning, and equipping staff, to operate remotely; lessons can be drawn from successful COVID-19 work requirements
- investigating alternative power sources and completing business continuity planning for power outages
- consider operating from multiple locations, especially for 24-hour businesses.

For more information, please see the [Small business climate adaptation toolkit](#).



Figure 1: The small business climate resilience process.

RELEVANT CLIMATE VULNERABILITIES

Climate projections for Greater Melbourne show:

- average temperatures will continue to increase
- there will be more frequent and longer heatwaves
- bushfire severity and duration will increase
- air pollution will become worse
- there will be fewer frosts
- rainfall will decline
- sea levels will continue rising, resulting in an increased risk of coastal erosion and flooding
- there will be more extreme weather events, including bushfires, severe storms, storm surges and heavy rainfall.

Some of these impacts (see Figure 2) will occur by 2030 to 2040. The impacts will get stronger over the proceeding decades.

For more information on climate impacts in your area, please visit the [Greater Melbourne Regional Climate Projections](#). Or there are [five other regional climate projections for Victoria](#).



Continuing rising daily temperatures



More frequent and longer heatwaves



Rising sea levels with increased risk of coastal erosion and inundation



Extreme rainfall events expected to become more intense



Rainfall expected to continue to decline in winter and spring



The fire season is longer and number of very high fire danger days in spring is increasing

Figure 2: Summary of climate impacts for Melbourne

THE RELATIVE COSTS

Anything that decreases the current operating costs is likely to be prioritised by professional service businesses. They would also consider adaptation plan actions that only marginally add to operational costs. Some businesses in this sector have lower relative capital costs than other sectors – most overheads relate to people, buildings and utilities; others have a large investment in small but precision equipment.

Understanding the potentially significant cost of inaction is driving action by professional service businesses.

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The Greater Melbourne Regional Climate Change Adaptation Strategy is a community-led project supporting Greater Melbourne communities to adapt to a changing climate. It is supported by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) and funded through the Supporting Our Regions to Adapt program.