

WHAT WE HAVE LEARNT FROM VICTORIAN ABORIGINAL PEOPLE IN OUR CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION WORK

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The Office of the Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability is a statutory body (Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability Act 2003) with a charter to report on greenhouse emissions in government departments and agencies in Victoria; develop and publish the Victorian State of the Environment report; and, engage broadly, both in person and electronically, with the public about ecologically sustainable development/decision making.

From 2009-2012 the Office has engaged in very broad spectrum public consultation across regional and metropolitan Victoria to determine science communication possibilities and issues and explore good and problematic environmental practices with a view to using case studies extensively in the reporting process. Examples of the use of case studies in education for sustainability, sustainable organization structure development and contracting for 'green' procurement can be found in the last three

greenhouse audits (see the website as www.ces.vic.gov.au).

Work done with Indigenous communities, both in this time frame and more broadly, has provided a very important guide for developing public participation methodologies to meet science communication needs. Many Publics. Participation, inventiveness and change, which reflects our consultation efforts in 2011 (www.ces.vic.gov.au) begins the work of incorporating these lessons in our reporting processes.

From the perspective of a non-Indigenous person, this paper elaborates upon the consultative methodology used, the science communication issues thrown up, and the prospect of getting to sustainable outcomes and adapting to climate change through a participatory process in Indigenous and non-Indigenous settings. Differences and similarities across cultural boundaries are discussed.