

Annual Report 2013–2014



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About Doctors for the Environment Australia

Doctors for the Environment Australia is a voluntary organisation of medical doctors in all states and territories. We work to address the diseases – local, national and global – caused by damage to the earth's environment. For example, climate change will bring to Australia an increased burden of heat stroke, injury from fire and storm, infectious diseases and social disruption and mental illness; whilst in the developing world it will bring famine and water shortage.

The medical profession has a proud record of service to the community. This record not only includes personal clinical care, but also involvement in global issues that threaten the future of humanity. We aim to use our scientific and medical skills to educate governments and industry, the public and our colleagues by developing educational materials such as policies and posters and by direct contact, in the endeavour to highlight the medical importance of our natural environment. To our patients we try to provide a role model in the care of the environment, for this is part of a preventative health ethos.

Our Vision

The World Health Organization estimates that one quarter of global disease and one third of that in children is due to modifiable environmental factors. If humanity is to make progress in solving the major issues of our time, all sections of the community will need to contribute.

Doctors for the Environment Australia aims to utilise the skills of members of the medical profession to address the ill health resulting from damage to the natural environment at local, national and global levels.

Our concerns range from the health aspects of climate change to the environmental aspects of children's health and to the local cardio-respiratory effects of transport pollution.

Chair's Report



At the UN Climate Summit held in New York on 23 September 2014, President Barack Obama reminded the world that the climate was changing faster than efforts to fix it.

He said: *"For all the immediate challenges that we gather to address this week-terrorism, instability, inequality, disease-there is one issue [climate change] that will define the contours of this century more dramatically than any other."*

The Secretary General of the UN, Ban Ki-moon and the major leaders of Europe also acknowledge this, and were prepared to say so at this very important Summit.

Although the Chinese Leader was absent, his spokesman clearly stated that China, now the world's greatest greenhouse gas emitter, has become acutely aware of the magnitude of the problem and is committed to a far greater emphasis on renewable energy technologies.

As we are all aware, Australia's Prime Minister deliberately avoided attendance at the Summit and, acting on his behalf, the Foreign Minister reiterated our country's inadequate commitments to tackle the problem. It is both practically and symbolically disgraceful that a country, whose annual per capita carbon emissions (14.6 tonnes of CO₂) is double that of Europe (6.8 tonnes) and China (7.2 tonnes), should have become a laggard rather than a leader on this issue.

Although the Federal Opposition in Australia has expressed a strong commitment towards renewable energy technology and the great employment opportunities which it will bring, it is still reluctant to urgently phase out the commitment to coal mining, transportation and combustion both at home and, via its exports, overseas.

A spokesman of Australia's independent Climate Institute, speaking at the Summit stated that Australia risks being "bogged in the backwaters" as other countries move on serious climate actions, investments and opportunities.

Fossil fuels have powered the 20th century and have enabled great economic advances for millions of people but the 21st century will have to be powered by renewable energy, or there will be no 22nd century worth inhabiting. Most of the current calculations indicate that the time for environmental reckoning will be even sooner. The longer the delay, the harder and more costly it will be.

According to the Global Carbon Report published in September 2014, global carbon emissions from burning fossil fuels and cement production reached a record 36 billion giga tonnes of CO₂ in 2013 and will increase to 40 billion tonnes by 2014¹.

The maximum global increase in atmospheric CO₂ emissions, which would restrict the average global temperature rise to no more than 2°C rise above pre-industrial levels, has been estimated at around 565 giga tonnes. Australia's massive Galilee Basin deposit alone has an estimated 60 billion tonnes of coal in it. The known global fossil fuel reserves are

¹ Global carbon report: emissions will hit new heights in 2014. Canadell P., Raupach M The Conversation 22 Sept 2014

now around five times the quantity which would allow the world to stay within the critical 2°C temperature rise level. Even that increase poses many additional serious environmental and health risks, as a 0.8°C rise is already causing.

Australia is beginning to experience these consequences with rising average daily temperatures, heat waves causing an upsurge in deaths amongst the most vulnerable, deadly bushfires, coastal storm surges magnifying incremental sea level rises, and the increasing frequency of droughts and floods in a country already prone to them.

Taking action

Doctors for the Environment Australia's primary role has been to concentrate upon the direct and indirect health consequences of environmental hazards including climate change. It has responsibly gathered the evidence and presented it through written submissions, speaking to policy makers, working collaboratively with others and advocating publicly.

Doctors for the Environment Australia has:

- Opposed the retention of old coal fired power stations and the expansion or creation of others.
- Actively supported renewable energy technologies and opposed the extension of unconventional natural gas fracking on health and environmental grounds.
- Made submissions on air contamination and on water quality concerns.
- Supported the retention of old growth forests and the expansion of reforestation for health and bio-diversity benefits.

As Professor Ross Garnaut has pointed out, the portents for disaster were clearly present prior to the outbreak of WW I, but the leaders of the European nations most involved lacked the vision and the wisdom to prevent it. A century later the evidence necessitating urgent, decisive and sufficient action on climate change is clearly present but self-interest amongst nations, corporations and many citizens is preventing it.

The current spread of violence across the globe, and now touching our shores, is a major issue but it is not the only one. It should be no excuse for avoiding the environmental and health issues.

What are the factors which give hope for effective action?

The iDEA14 Conference held in Melbourne in March was a very informative and motivating event. It was a credit to those who organised and contributed towards it.

The positive power of rapid communications and social media enabled the recent People's Climate Marches to occur in a co-ordinated manner across the globe with tens of thousands of concerned people marching in multiple individual cities and hundreds marching in many towns, a total of almost one million people.

The attempt to eliminate an authoritative voice of advice to government by closing the Climate Commission was thwarted by a tremendous public response, resulting in the funding of the Climate Council through donations as its replacement.

There is a realisation amongst the economically astute leaders of the IMF and the World Bank that the current economic model based upon fossil fuel usage is now flawed. We can foresee that major investments into fossil fuel assets will be left stranded.

The divestment movement targeting banks and superannuation funds which continue to support major fossil fuel initiatives is still in an embryo phase but has the potential to gather great momentum as the environmental crisis worsens.

Multiple environmentally concerned groups are becoming established; many with great social networking skills, and increasingly collaborations are being formed. The youth of many countries are becoming better informed and motivated for effective environmental action.

In the meantime, major hidden economic costs from clinging to fossil fuels are still being incurred. The externalities of coal include the major health costs associated with its mining, while transportation and combustion add another \$2.6 billion per annum to the true costs in Australia alone. Storm surges will place coastal communities and infrastructure at increasing levels of economic risk and this will be reflected in rising insurance costs. The insurance costs in bushfire prone regions will rise with the average annual temperature increases. There are likely to be many environmental refugees in our region as the South Pacific Island countries are affected by rising sea levels. Security concerns, already under stress, will be under increasing additional pressure if climate change is not tackled with the utmost urgency.

Australia will miss out on enormous intellectual, employment and economic advantages if it does not capitalise on its great natural advantages of abundant sunlight, wind, wave and space. The comfort and health of its citizens will suffer and history will judge it very harshly unless there is a fundamental change to its current environmental trajectory.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kingsley Faulkner', is displayed on a light grey rectangular background.

Professor Kingsley Faulkner AM
Chair

Vale Tony McMichael

We are deeply saddened by the death of Tony McMichael on 26 September 2014 and extend our sympathies to his family.

Professor McMichael's contributions to world health and climate change research and advocacy were extensive².

He had a key role in the formation and work of Doctors for the Environment Australia and worked tirelessly. His role was crucial in the formation of DEA in 1999³. The early meetings of the committee were in his department in Canberra and he fostered our first scientific meeting at the Shine Dome, The Australian Academy of Science. Tony was the first member on our Scientific Advisory Committee and was in the thick of early work with DEA to help the AMA and the Royal Australasian College of Physicians to try to come to terms with climate change. He expressed his disappointment at the failings of the College. The DEA newsletters in 2014 illustrate that he was still heavily involved in advocacy with the letter on the G20 to the Prime Minister⁴ and his endorsement of DEA in our Prospectus for Fundraising⁵.

In 2013 Tony co-authored a revision of the DEA Climate Change and Health Policy⁶ and the DEA Climate Change and Health Position Statement⁷ which he had been revising at intervals since he wrote it in 2002. Over the years he was involved in many other DEA initiatives, one of the most important being in 2008 when he co-authored "Climate Change Health Check 2020"⁸ for DEA and the Climate Institute which linked climate change science with the spectrum of climate related illnesses that doctors might be seeing in 2020.



David Shearman, Hon Secretary (left) with Tony McMichael (right)

His prodigious productivity was based not only on his intellect but on his ability to manage his time. When DEA asked for help, he answered positively saying what he could do and when he would deliver by scheduling it into his program. As secretary of DEA, I have in my care all Tony's communications with us over a decade or more. It is a vast correspondence providing advice and input on meetings with politicians, climate information for use politically, how to approach changes in Health Acts, arranging for students going to

² <https://researchers.anu.edu.au/researchers/mcmichael-a-j#biography>

³ <http://dea.org.au/about/history>

⁴ <http://dea.org.au/news/article/open-letter-to-the-hon-tony-abbott-mp>

⁵ http://dea.org.au/images/general/DEA_Fundraising_Prospectus_08-14.pdf

⁶ http://dea.org.au/images/general/DEA_Climate_Change_and_Health_Policy_05-13.pdf

⁷ http://dea.org.au/images/general/DEA_Position_Statement-Climate_Change_and_Health_05-13.pdf

⁸ http://dea.org.au/images/general/Climate_Change_Health_Check_2020.pdf

overseas departments, discussions over IPCC reports - he had persuaded me to be involved in two successive reports - and even information on coal fired power plants (long before DEA had a policy).

All in all this demonstrates Tony's substantial behind-the-scenes involvement in a non-government organisation which is unlikely to be matched by any other leading scientific expert.

"Medicine and the World had lost a great man at the peak of his wisdom."

He had a holistic view on how the profession should advocate on climate change. As an academic he realised that his research and its implications would not be absorbed into national concern without personal advocacy and that assistance from a unified profession was vital. He further recognised the importance of having an organisation such as DEA with a predominance of clinical doctors who promulgated population health and spoke up on climate change in the absence of institutions such as the RACP⁹.

When Tony died Medicine and the World had lost a great man at the peak of his wisdom.

These are excerpts from an appreciation of the life of Tony McMichael by David Shearman¹⁰.

Climate change and health

The theme of climate change is inherent in all our activity on fossil fuels, renewable energy and protection of biodiversity described in later sections of this report.

The year of 2013-2014 was notable for the relentless rise in carbon emissions and world temperatures and extreme weather events and other health effects as detailed by Tony McMichael¹¹ and by Mark Braidwood and Catherine Pendrey in the Medical Journal of Australia¹².

This theme continued with DEA media releases^{13,14}, an opinion piece¹⁵ and an interview on ABC news¹⁶.

In a DEA media statement in July 2013 "Clean energy future still possible" we "commended the (previous) Federal Government for its continuing commitment to investment in renewable energies when it substitutes the carbon tax with carbon trading. The government announced its "early transition to a carbon trading scheme this week"¹⁷.

⁹ <http://blogs.crikey.com.au/croakey/2011/05/20/racp-urged-to-show-leadership-on-climate-change-the-greatest-threat-to-human-health-in-the-21st-century/>

¹⁰ <http://dea.org.au/news/article/tony-mcmichael-his-contribution-to-dea-and-an-appreciation-of-his-life>

¹¹ <http://theconversation.com/why-climate-change-should-be-a-key-health-issue-this-election-15761>

¹² <https://www.mja.com.au/insight/2014/12/mark-braidwood-catherine-pendrey-time-act>

¹³ <http://dea.org.au/news/article/media-release-warming-climate-threatens-health-doctors-warn>

¹⁴ <http://dea.org.au/news/article/heat-related-deaths-to-rise>

¹⁵ <http://dea.org.au/news/article/warming-climate-threatens-health-doctors-warn>

¹⁶ <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-01-15/power-outages-and-soaring-temperatures-raise/5202110>

In the face of world wide experience of extreme weather events which signalled a resurgence in public interest, the new Australian government began enacting policies to reduce Australia's contribution to action by repealing the carbon tax. It is fair to say that DEA, like many other organisations has struggled to make its voice heard in this challenging time.

Nevertheless DEA made a submission to the Senate Environment and Communications Committee on the Government's Direct Action Plan¹⁸ and DEA members appeared at the hearings in Perth to express their concerns.

DEA members in WA ran a successful appeal to finance an advertisement in the West Australian newspaper urging voters to consider climate change in an election re-run for WA representatives to the Federal Senate^{19,20}. The advertisement was publically supported by Professor Fiona Stanley, a DEA member who placed her name on the advertisement. Professor Stanley is a former Australian of the Year and a new tertiary hospital is being built in her name.



In April 2014, DEA organised a lecture on children's health and climate change given by Professor Fiona Stanley. Seventy medical or health science students and doctors attended. Extensive media resulted from the event, including a front page banner headline and a page 3 article in the West Australian²¹, and a radio interview on ABC Radio National Breakfast²². The event was also picked up in a page 5 article in The Age, and in the Sydney Morning Herald²³, with a further article resulting from Attorney General George Brandis's comments²⁴, international media attention²⁵ and significant commentary on Facebook from users external to DEA were also highlights^{26,27,28}.

DEA ran a highly successful climate change educational program iDEA 14 (page 18) and acted on disinvestment from fossil fuels throughout the year (page 16).

¹⁷ <http://dea.org.au/news/article/clean-energy-future-still-possible>

¹⁸ http://dea.org.au/images/uploads/submissions/Direct_Action_Plan_Submission_01-14.pdf

¹⁹ <http://dea.org.au/news/article/advertisement-as-doctors-were-already-seeing-the-impacts-of-climate-change>

²⁰ <http://dea.org.au/news/article/media-release-doctors-urge-wa-voters-to-consider-climate-change>

²¹ <https://au.news.yahoo.com/thewest/latest/a/22668720/stanley-in-climate-change-plea/>

²² <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/breakfast/former-australian-of-the-year-attacks-climate-sceptics/5396302>

²³ <http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/fiona-stanley-attacks-deniers-and-tony-abbott-warns-climate-change-is-a-serious-health-issue-20140417-zqvuu.html>

²⁴ <http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/climate-change-proponents-using-mediaeval-tactics-george-brandis-20140418-zqwf.html>

²⁵ http://article.wn.com/view/2014/04/17/Fiona_Stanley_attacks_deniers_and_Tony_Abbott_warns_climate_t/

²⁶ https://www.facebook.com/Australian.Greens/posts/10152042732923663?stream_ref=10

²⁷ https://www.facebook.com/Senator.Christine.Milne/posts/10151955973165916?stream_ref=10

²⁸ <http://www.interhealth.org.au/climate-change-a-health-issue-the-west-australian/>

Action on fossil fuels

Doctors for the Environment Australia has a policy to recommend rapid transition away from coal and gas based upon their contribution to both greenhouse gas emissions and to air pollution.

This advocacy to reduce the use of coal and gas globally is founded on the need to contain the amount of CO₂ in the atmosphere to 3.2 trillion metric tons, which is calculated to result in a temperature rise of 2°C. Nearly two-thirds of this budget has already been spent, and carbon emissions are on track to exhaust the budget in 30 years. Yet Australia has proposals for 89 new coal mines that may more than double our annual output from about 430 million tonnes in 2011 to about 980 million tonnes by 2020²⁹.

Our contributions to address this issue are diverse and include:

- Analysing regulatory issues for coal and gas developments, for example our submission to the Australian Government Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities on the Draft significant impact guidelines: Coal seam gas and large coal mining developments – impacts on water resources³⁰.
- Identification of irregularities which can be used later at enquiries.
- Appearances before Parliamentary committees.
- Liaison with community groups to provide them with advice and educational material.
- Articles in the press and lectures.

During 2013-2014 we have been fortunate in having the help and expertise of Dr Merryn Redenbach, DEA Research and Liaison Officer, who has given many talks across five states explaining the health effects of coal, unconventional gas and air pollution. Additionally, Merryn has organised speakers and resources for many other meetings.

Air Quality and Pollution

The World Health Organization has indicated that air pollution is a major environmental risk to health with 3.7 million premature deaths worldwide in 2012. Combustion of coal is responsible for a significant proportion³¹.

Australia's air quality standards and regulation are inadequate to prevent harm to health and the pollution from coal fired power stations is responsible for about 1,500 deaths per year. DEA works for improved air quality regulation and delivery by reducing coal combustion.

As reported in last year's Annual Report, DEA made an appearance before the Senate Community Affairs Committee for an enquiry into Air Quality in Australia³². Thereafter the issue became topical with the Morwell fire pollution reported below which provided the

²⁹ <http://images.smh.com.au/file/2013/12/16/5013079/Stranded1.pdf?rand=1387151593788>

³⁰ http://dea.org.au/images/uploads/submissions/CSG_and_large_coal_mining_impacts_on_water_resources_submission_07-13.pdf

³¹ <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs313/en/>

³² www.dea.org.au/images/uploads/submissions/Impacts_on_health_of_air_quality_in_Australia_Submission.v103-13.pdf

impetus for a workshop on air quality later in the year organised by DEA, Environmental Justice of Australia and the Conservation Council of New South Wales.

Coal mining, combustion and health

The health and environmental effect of coal mining and combustion is the dominant issue in containing the World's greenhouse emissions; it is a huge public health issue which was highlighted by the US Presidential Statement on coal pollution which changed the conversation on climate change to human health and coal pollution. DEA followed this with articles in Crikey, "*Obama coughs up the solution to coal pollution*" and in The Conversation "*Not so cheap: Australia needs to acknowledge the real cost of coal*"^{33,34}.

Our activity in Queensland has been in relation to the new Acland coal mine³⁵ and to the huge new developments in the Galilee Basin³⁶. We expressed concerns to the Great Barrier Reef Coastal Component Strategic Assessment on the likely effects of coal mining on the viability of the Reef³⁷. In New South Wales we acted over the proposed new coal loader at Newcastle and some mines in the Hunter; in Victoria, the brown coal usage and developments in the Latrobe; in South Australia with the proposed replacement of coal with Solar Thermal at Port Augusta³⁸; in Collie and Bunbury in Western Australia; and with the proposed Langloh mine in Tasmania³⁹.

Below we describe in more detail our actions in two of these regions:

Newcastle and the Hunter (NSW)

Coal pollution in NSW arises from mining mainly in the Hunter, transport of coal to Newcastle in coal wagons and from loading coal for export in Newcastle.

Considerable community concern has developed over the performance of the NSW EPA and approval processes.

As part of its remit, DEA made a comprehensive submission opposing the amendments to the NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure "State Environmental Planning Policy (Mining, Petroleum Production and Extractive Industries) Amendment (Resource Significance) 2013"⁴⁰ on the grounds of inadequate health assessment, economic outcomes and air quality standards. In our opinion, the proposed amendments inappropriately promote and facilitate the development of resource mining at the expense of the other valuable land uses, ecosystems, local communities, human health and the stability of our climate. The proposal appears to be in direct contradiction to the NSW government's own planning legislation, and overall policy to assess the triple bottom line in new developments.

The perceived need for more coal loading is fuelling the development of the Port Waratah Coal Services Terminal 4 Newcastle. DEA made a detailed submission to the Environmental

³³ <http://www.crikey.com.au/2014/06/06/obama-coughs-up-the-solution-to-coal-pollution/>

³⁴ <http://theconversation.com/not-so-cheap-australia-needs-to-acknowledge-the-real-cos>

³⁵ http://dea.org.au/images/uploads/submissions/Acland_Stage_3_EIS_Submission_02-14.pdf

³⁶ http://dea.org.au/images/uploads/submissions/Carmichael_Coal_Mine_and_Rail_Project_SEIS_Submission_12-13.pdf

³⁷ http://dea.org.au/images/uploads/submissions/Great_Barrier_Reef_Strategic_Assessment_Submission_01-14.pdf

³⁸ www.reneweconomy.com.au/2013/a-letter-to-arena-and-alinta-why-dump-port-augusta-solar-72228

³⁹ http://dea.org.au/images/uploads/submissions/Langloh_Mine_Submission_11-13.pdf

⁴⁰ http://dea.org.au/images/uploads/submissions/NSW_Mining_SEPP_Submission_08-13_.pdf

Impact Statement, critically reviewing the air pollution data which, in our judgement, was flawed⁴¹. Despite these concerns the New South Wales Department of Planning is recommending⁴² the Planning Assessment Commission (PAC) approve this controversial multi-billion dollar project. DEA has expressed opposition on health grounds⁴³.

Action on coal dust from wagon transit involved work with the Coal Terminal Action Group and articles in the press⁴⁴.

DEA was integral in opposing the "Million Dollar Prize" promotion by the NSW Mining Council and radio WSFM to promote the bounties of the coal industry in the Hunter. It was seen by DEA as totally unacceptable on health grounds. An open letter⁴⁵ opposing this promotion was written by DEA and signed by 30 health leaders, as well as being endorsed by Bill McKibben; Australian Religious Response to Climate Change; Catholic Religious Australia; Get Up!; Greenpeace Australia Pacific; Lock the Gate Alliance; Nature Conservation Council of NSW; Our Land, Our Water, Our Future; Total Environment Centre; The Sisters of Saint Joseph (order of Mary MacKillop) and The Wilderness Society^{46,47,48}.

The Mining Council produced a response to the open letter stating "We respect everyone's right to express their view on mining. However a balanced perspective is needed, based on science, facts and evidence, and accepting that mining is essential for almost every critical input for a functioning, modern society, including the electricity provided by coal"⁴⁹.

Anglesea, Morwell and more (Victoria)

Victoria is wedded to brown coal and ignores the ill health it causes. However the suffering at Morwell as result of the fire at the Hazelwood mine might have an important impact, having drawn attention to the air pollution and lack of air quality monitoring.

The fire galvanised the community and DEA's Merryn Redenbach spoke to over 1500 people at a rally in Morwell⁵⁰, emphasizing that this coal mine fire is a reminder and stark example of coal's very real threat to our health and environment. It was reported in The Guardian Australia⁵¹. DEA management committee member A/Prof Marion Carey wrote an article '*Coal mine fires remind us of coal's threat to our environment, climate and health*'⁵² with extracts published in The Conversation⁵³. In June 2014, DEA made a submission to the Mine enquiry⁵⁴, for which the report is now published⁵⁵. The Department of Health has responded by announcing a tender process for a 'Long term study into the potential health effects from the Hazelwood coal mine fire'⁵⁶.

⁴¹ http://majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au/?action=view_submission&job_id=4399&submission_id=84610

⁴² <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-06-30/planning-officials-recommend-pac-approve-t4-loader/5560724>

⁴³ <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-06-30/planning-officials-recommend-pac-approve-t4-loader/5560724>

⁴⁴ <http://www.theherald.com.au/story/2139606/opinion-make-the-epa-accountable-for-coal-dust/?cs=391>

⁴⁵ http://dea.org.au/images/general/Letter_-_ARN_Minerals_Council_Million_Dollar_Mine_promotion_13-2-14.pdf

⁴⁶ http://dea.org.au/images/general/Letter_-_ARN_Minerals_Council_Million_Dollar_Mine_promotion_13-2-14.pdf

⁴⁷ <http://dea.org.au/news/article/health-leaders-urge-major-media-company-end-coal-lobby-deal>

⁴⁸ <http://www.theherald.com.au/story/2105204/dust-like-tobacco-smoke-doctor/?cs=305>

⁴⁹ <http://www.nswmining.com.au/menu/media/news/2014/february/response-to-doctors-for-the-environment>

⁵⁰ <http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/victoria/morwell-people-join-protest-as-fire-crisis-continues-to-cripple-town/story-fni0fit3-1226843291677>

⁵¹ <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/mar/03/morwell-coalmine-fire-doctors-warn-residents>

⁵² <http://dea.org.au/news/article/coal-mine-fires-remind-us-of-coals-threat-to-our-environment-climate-and-he>

⁵³ <https://theconversation.com/young-and-old-told-to-leave-morwell-south-amid-smoke-fears-23823>

⁵⁴ http://dea.org.au/images/uploads/submissions/SO_0162-DOCTORS-FOR-THE-ENVIRONMENT-AUSTRALIA.pdf

⁵⁵ <http://report.hazelwoodinquiry.vic.gov.au/>

⁵⁶ <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/hazelwood/health-study.htm>

There was further good news about the proposed Dual Gas Demonstration Project, Morwell. In 2012 DEA obtained pro bono legal counsel to oppose this development on health grounds, through the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT). Conditions were imposed by VCAT and the Federal Government withdrew finance. In December 2013 the Victorian government withdrew its grant and the proponent announced the project was “mothballed”⁵⁷.

DEA has been actively working for several years with the local Surf Coast Air Action group to raise awareness of the local health impacts of the Anglesea power plant and adjacent mine. In December 2013, DEA made a submission opposing the application for an Electricity Generation License for Anglesea Power Station from Alcoa of Australia Limited⁵⁸.

In February 2014 Alcoa Australia announced that it would be closing its Point Henry aluminium smelter; this consumed over 6% of Victoria’s electricity and was the primary reason the Anglesea Alcoa coal power plant has justified its continued operations (less than 1.5km from the local primary school and town residents). As indicated in a DEA media release this was an opportunity to close the plant and mine⁵⁹. Victorian DEA Chair, Eugenie Kayak, was quoted in local papers the ECHO and Geelong Star⁶⁰ following the DEA press release.



Unconventional gas mining and health

Unconventional gas (UG) development is largely unregulated and therefore unaccountable for potential health hazards from water contamination and from air pollution from the well heads. In addition its masquerade as a transition fuel from coal in the face of a significant greenhouse emission profile puts the world’s carbon budget in danger. The role of DEA has been to inform communities of these issues through presentations, submissions, articles and other avenues of advocacy.

There are hundreds of UG developments around Australia. Here we illustrate some of DEA’s activity.

New South Wales

The contributions of DEA (NSW) were:

- submissions to government bodies in response to the NSW Government’s major policy changes to reduce community input, monitor and regulate requirements and access to legal recourse should harm occur from UG and coal development operations in the State- see our submission to the NSW Government Planning Review – White Paper⁶¹.

⁵⁷ <http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/victoria-axes-50-million-grant-for-hrl-coalfuelled-power-plant-20131121-2xyw.html>

⁵⁸ www.dea.org.au/images/uploads/submissions/Anglesea_Electricity_License_Submission_12-13.pdf

⁵⁹ www.dea.org.au/images/uploads/submissions/Anglesea_Electricity_License_Submission_12-13.pdf

⁶⁰ <http://geelong.starcommunity.com.au/indy/2014-02-20/80-jobs-doubts-alcoas-anglesea-power-station/>

⁶¹ http://dea.org.au/images/uploads/submissions/NSW_Planning_Review_White_Paper_submission_06-13.pdf

- Submission on the amendments to the NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure 'State Environmental Policy Plan (SEPP) on Mining, Petroleum Products and Extractive Industries Amendment (Resource Significance) 2013'⁶².
- The Pilliga water contamination incident provided opportunities to highlight health concerns⁶³ and several press conferences and radio interviews were done by Drs Helen Redmond and Melissa Haswell. Our contribution to the issue in the Medical Journal of Australia⁶⁴ was followed by an Insight article⁶⁵ and subsequent media^{66, 67, 68}.
- DEA also used a Planning and Assessment Commission hearing at Narrabri to highlight the potential health harms of Unconventional gas⁶⁹ and DEA members have spoken at rallies and delivered many community talks around the state.



South Australia

The South East of South Australia is a large and important agricultural region which faces a major influx of UG activity. DEA and its local member Dr Catherine Pye raised concerns in letters and factsheets sent to all seven mayors and councillors in the South East, submitted material to the South East Local Government Association (SELGA) workshop on UG, and organised a community petition. In June, SELGA requested a moratorium on UG activity until 'independent analysis is undertaken'⁷⁰. It is likely DEA input on UG was a supportive component in this decision which was achieved by the local community, and by groups such as the Limestone Coast Protection Association.

Northern Territory

DEA (NT) led by Dr Rosalie Schulz is developing its resources to address the likely UG boom and has made a submission⁷¹ to the NT Hydraulic Fracturing Inquiry suggesting broader terms of reference. This inquiry is particularly important as the NT Government has signalled an intent that it may stand in place of individual Environmental Impact Assessments for projects. DEA is advocating strongly that Environmental Impact Assessments are important for each site and should include health impact assessment. This view was conveyed in discussions with the Commissioner.

⁶² http://dea.org.au/images/uploads/submissions/NSW_Mining_SEPP_Submission_08-13_.pdf

⁶³ <http://www.echo.net.au/2014/03/pilliga-contamination-sparks-calls-halt-csg-industry/>

⁶⁴ <https://www.mja.com.au/journal/2014/200/9/harms-unknown-health-uncertainties-cast-doubt-role-unconventional-gas-australias>

⁶⁵ <https://www.mja.com.au/insight/2014/17/gas-mining-health-concerns>

⁶⁶ <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-05-19/researchers-concerned-csg-could-threaten-food-and-water-security/5461028>

⁶⁷ <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/health-science/health-fears-voiced-over-coalseam-gas-projects/story-e6frg8y6-1226922051970#>

⁶⁸ <http://www.businessinsider.com.au/australian-doctors-coal-seam-gas-is-a-potential-threat-to-food-and-water-security-2014-5>

⁶⁹ <http://www.pac.nsw.gov.au/Projects/tabid/77/ctl/viewreview/mid/462/pac/401/view/readonly/myctl/rev/Default.aspx>

⁷⁰ <http://www.naracoorteherald.com.au/story/2360392/selga-supports-moratorium-on-unconventional-gas-extraction/>

⁷¹ http://dea.org.au/images/uploads/submissions/DEA_Hydraulic_fracturing_in_NT_inquiry_final.pdf

Victoria

DEA members were active across the state raising awareness at dozens of community meetings, council meetings, through individual conversations and connections with other organisations about our concerns surrounding the potential health implications of the UG industry and we have drawn attention to the issue in the national press⁷².

Despite industry promotion, the Victorian Premier announced that the Victorian moratorium on the process of fracking and the halt on granting of new (on shore unconventional gas) licenses will continue until July 2015. He is quoted as saying "*We will never, ever allow onshore gas if it jeopardises our underground water, if it jeopardises our environment, and if it jeopardises our food and agriculture production.*"

The Victorian Government came under sustained pressure from the township of Seaspray to refuse a licence for local horizontal drilling by gas prospecting company Lakes Oil. Ninety-seven per cent of Seaspray residents voted for their community to be Gasfield Free. Their community campaign has been supported by DEA members Drs Rowena Knowsen, Jo McCubbin and Malcolm McKelvie.

DEA's Unconventional Gas sub-committee convenor Adjunct Associate Professor Marion Carey spoke to a packed local hall at a very topical and tense public forum in Winchelsea, Victoria. The event was hosted by the local Surf Coast Council and Winchelsea Business and Tourism Association Forum and was attended by approximately 300 people.

Western Australia

DEA members Drs Greg Glazov, Linda Selvey and George Crisp made a comprehensive submission on behalf of DEA to the Inquiry into the Implications for Western Australia of Hydraulic Fracturing for Unconventional Gas. DEA recommended that, due to the multiple significant and cumulative risks to human health, there be a moratorium on development of the shale gas industry in WA until long-term safety has been established⁷³.

Members have been active in fighting for proper assessment of unconventional gas activities in the Kimberley. An appeal was lodged in objection to the Environmental Protection Authority's decision not to assess the Laurel Formation Tight Gas Pilot Exploration Program and DEA members made a presentation to the Office of the Appeals Convenor.

George Crisp and Greg Glazov have given community talks and media interviews about unconventional gas in Perth and in the Mid West. These include regional environmental groups, a community forum in Geraldton in April⁷⁴, public community meetings leading up to the state election and others⁷⁵.

⁷² <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-11-05/shearman-people-are-scared-about-fracking-for-good-reason/5069910>

⁷³ http://dea.org.au/images/uploads/submissions/WA_Inquiry_into_Hydraulic_Fracturing_-_UG_Submission_09-13.pdf

⁷⁴ <http://www.cgg.wa.gov.au/events/community-meeting-fracking>

⁷⁵ <http://nofrackingway.org.au/?p=434>

Fossil fuel divestment

Divestment of investments in fossil fuels has become a policy of many community groups concerned about climate change. Companies which produce fossil fuel and the banks and superannuation funds which invest in them have been targeted. A formal sub-committee for divestment was formed within DEA a year ago. Activities have included promotion of divestment to the DEA membership; regular reporting of progress from the rapidly growing fossil fuel divestment movement; and a highly visible health presence at the National Day of Divestment in May 2014⁷⁶. Media releases were issued on that occasion and on the announcement of the British Medical Association of their divestment in June 2014⁷⁷.



Members of the divestment sub-committee have approached all state and territory branches of the Australian Medical Association (AMA) and organised visits to discuss the importance of medical organisations participating in and promoting divestment. These visits are well underway and will be followed by an approach to the federal AMA in due course. They have been well received by the AMA.

A flyer regarding divestment and public health was created in partnership between DEA, The Australian Medical Students' Association and 350.org and a Divestment Fact Sheet is in the final stages of development⁷⁸.

DEA is a partner organisation of the Go Fossil Free campaign of 350.org⁷⁹.

DEA student members have promoted divestment among global health groups on university campuses around Australia and have facilitated these groups to divest their bank accounts.

⁷⁶ <http://dea.org.au/news/article/media-release-doctors-join-national-day-of-divestment-action-saturday-3-may>

⁷⁷ <http://dea.org.au/news/article/media-release-26-june-2014>

⁷⁸ <http://dea.org.au/topics/article/divestment-and-public-health-flyer>

⁷⁹ <http://350.org.au/campaigns/go-fossil-free/>

The transition to renewable energy - a public health measure

To those doctors who see the health consequences of coal throughout the world, this resource should be replaced as soon as possible. In the face of these health consequences, the government has adopted a policy "see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil." to these health effects and their costs by adopting a mantra of "coal is cheap". This has proved difficult to quash despite the facts and evidence presented in our study "How coal burns Australia - The true cost of burning coal"⁸⁰.

This truth has been the basis of many articles, letters and submissions for example:

- Submission to the Energy White Paper Issue Paper February 2014⁸¹.
- Submission to the Senate Environment and Communications Committee: Enquiry into the Government's Direct Action Plan⁸².
- Submission to the Clean Energy Legislation (Carbon Tax Repeal) Bill 2013 and Related Bills⁸³.

Our basic recommendations in these submissions are:

- The full life cycle costs of all modalities of energy generation must be assessed and accounted for to provide a meaningful economic comparison.
- Health co-benefits from energy, transport and built environment choices should be considered and maximized.
- Health impact assessment (HIA) should inform decision-making regarding energy and resource projects.
- Carbon budgets in accordance with best scientific knowledge must guide energy choices.

Forests and biodiversity

The committee with Dr Dimity Williams as Convenor works to share our passion for nature by developing the best ways for DEA to highlight the inter-relationship between our health and natural ecosystems. We do this by writing in medical and other publications, creating resources on biodiversity and health for DEA members and presenting at conferences. We also actively collaborate with other organisations who seek to highlight the value of nature for wellbeing.

The committee's work this year includes:

- Finalisation of a Biodiversity Policy and Position Statement for DEA - these are publicly available on our website and are a great resource for our members⁸⁴.

⁸⁰ http://dea.org.au/images/general/How_coal_burns_Aust._-True_cost_of_burning_coal_04-13.pdf

⁸¹ http://dea.org.au/images/uploads/submissions/EWP_-_Issue_Paper_Submission_02-14.pdf

⁸² http://dea.org.au/images/uploads/submissions/Direct_Action_Plan_Submission_01-14.pdf

⁸³ http://dea.org.au/images/uploads/submissions/Clean_Energy_Legislation_Submission_11-13.pdf

⁸⁴ http://dea.org.au/images/general/DEA_policy_biodiversity.pdf

- Submission to the Tasmanian Government's review of High Conservation Value Forests. This submission outlines the adverse health impacts of logging biodiverse high conservation value forests⁸⁵.
- Submission to the Federal Government's 'The Great Barrier Reef Coastal Component Strategic Assessment'. As outlined by the United Nations, the Great Barrier Reef is of "natural significance, which is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and is of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity". Members of our committee worked with Queensland members on this submission⁸⁶.
- Ongoing collaboration with the International Union for the Conservation of Nature in the development of Healthy Parks Healthy People guidelines. These are to be publicly presented at the forthcoming IUCN Parks Congress in Sydney in November 2014.
- DEA has lent its support to the public campaign for the creation of the Great Forest National Park, a new national park in the central Victorian highlands. This proposal also has the support of the National Trust and The Royal Society of Victoria⁸⁷.

In addition to the work of this committee, many DEA members have been working on issues that impact our forests and ecosystems such as the Great Barrier Reef and the Leard State Forest. The work by our coal and unconventional gas committees and other individuals, which highlights the effects these industries have on both land and marine ecosystems, is crucial.

iDEA14 Conference

iDEA14 was a great success. As DEA's student-led annual conference, this year's meeting saw the largest turnout in its history; four hundred doctors and medical students from all over Australia coming together for an inspiring two days in Melbourne.

Through an impressive line-up of eminent speakers, experts in their respective fields of science, health, economics and politics, iDEA14 offered a spectacular opportunity to gain the latest, evidence-based data regarding climate change and its widespread health and psychosocial implications, and the required actions.



⁸⁵ <http://dea.org.au/resources/submissions/forestry-tasmania-hcv-submission>

⁸⁶ <http://dea.org.au/resources/submissions/great-barrier-reef-coastal-component-strategic-assessment-submission>

⁸⁷ <http://www.greatforestnationalpark.com.au>

Speakers included Professor David Griggs, Professor Tim Flannery, Associate Professor Linda Selvey, Professor Fiona Stanley, Professor Ross Garnaut, Mark Ogge, Phil Harrington, Charlie Wood, Dr Kate Charlesworth, Dr Sallie Forrest and Professor Rob Moodie. Federal Environment Minister Greg Hunt, Shadow Environment Minister Mark Butler, and Greens Senator Richard Di Natale presented the latest political approach to climate change. Videos of each contribution are at <http://dea.org.au/resources/category/video>. The conference was reported in the Guardian⁸⁸, in Croakey⁸⁹ and in the Independent⁹⁰.

iDEA14 also provided skill building training opportunities, to facilitate crucially required action and advocacy into the future. Skill building included pre-conference workshops, which introduced delegates to theories of change presented by the Australian Youth Climate Coalition, and public engagement strategies, presented by Beyond Zero Emissions. Practical workshops regarding the power of story, strategies to transition to a just and sustainable world and how to effectively communicate climate change and health issues to other health professionals also featured.

The conference fostered discussion and broad thinking through question time featuring an anonymous text number to pose questions to the speaker. This, along with the break times, an entertaining social event and science-related comedy function, and break-out sessions on the final afternoon, allowed the delegates to meet active, like-minded people from across the country and strategise and plan actions for the upcoming year.



The Student Committee for 2014/2015 was elected, with Grace Davies as National DEA Student Representative.

A huge thank you goes to medical student Kate Lardner and Dr Harry Jennens for crucial roles in organising and promoting the conference.

A clear direction emerged from the conference. Urgent, effective action on climate change is paramount to protect the health of our current and future populations and renewable energy is a viable, sustainable solution in Australia, from an economic and a short and long-term health perspective. Divestment and advocacy were important strategies discussed to achieve this.

⁸⁸ <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/mar/23/greg-hunt-confident-of-helping-china-us-india-and-eu-cut-carbon-emissions>

⁸⁹ <http://blogs.crikey.com.au/croakey/2014/03/26/what-did-you-do-while-the-earth-was-unravelling-health-sector-urged-to-act-on-climate-change/>

⁹⁰ <http://www.independentaustralia.net/life/life-display/act-on-climate-change-for-the-sake-of-the-future--doctors-orders,6358>

Work subsequently commenced to ensure that iDEA15 will also deliver a sparkling and inspiring program. Hosted in Sydney and convened by student Todd Gregory supported by Dr Helen Redmond, the conference dates are March 14-15, 2015. Further information is available at: <http://www.idea15.net/>

Parliamentary visits and letters

Briefing visits to state and federal parliamentarians, Ministers and Shadow Ministers remain a key part of our activity. In person we explain the health aspects of the issues described above. We approach each visit strategically with a team of two or three members of DEA including a student member. This team is usually well received. In 2013-2014 there were visits to senior federal Ministers and Shadow Ministers and visits to their counterparts in most states.

On issues of great importance to us we have made several mail-outs with briefing papers to all federal Members of Parliament and Ministers.

Educational activities

The educational role of DEA is paramount and is embodied in all our activities – addressing community groups, 'grand rounds' in hospitals, delivering workshops on current issues and briefing elected representatives whether in their offices or in committees. For the year 2013-2014, these have been accomplished on numerous occasions in many parts of Australia.



The highlight of our educational program was the iDEA14 meeting in Melbourne which was an outstanding success. It reflects the part and indeed leadership the students display within the organisation with their contributions facilitated by their full membership status.

The philosophy of medical education has been on full display whereby the teacher student relationship evolves into partnership in which we learn from each other.

Submissions made to parliamentary committees

DEA submissions:

Draft significant impact guidelines: CSG and large coal mining impacts on water resources

[www.dea.org.au/images/uploads/submissions/CSG and large coal mining impacts on water resources submission 07-13.pdf](http://www.dea.org.au/images/uploads/submissions/CSG_and_large_coal_mining_impacts_on_water_resources_submission_07-13.pdf)

Productivity Commission into the non-financial barriers to mineral and energy resource exploration

[www.dea.org.au/images/uploads/submissions/Productivity Commission Resource Exploration 07-13.pdf](http://www.dea.org.au/images/uploads/submissions/Productivity_Commission_Resource_Exploration_07-13.pdf)

NSW State Environmental Planning Policy on Mining, Petroleum Production and Extractive Industries Amendment

[www.dea.org.au/images/uploads/submissions/NSW Mining SEPP Submission 08-13 .pdf](http://www.dea.org.au/images/uploads/submissions/NSW_Mining_SEPP_Submission_08-13_.pdf)

NSW EPA draft protection of the Environment Operations Amendment (Native Forest and Bio-material)

[www.dea.org.au/images/uploads/submissions/Native forest bio material submission 08-13.pdf](http://www.dea.org.au/images/uploads/submissions/Native_forest_bio_material_submission_08-13.pdf)

Proposed Port Pirie Smelter Transformation

[http://dea.org.au/images/uploads/submissions/PER Port Pirie Smelter Transformation Submission 09-13.pdf](http://dea.org.au/images/uploads/submissions/PER_Port_Pirie_Smelter_Transformation_Submission_09-13.pdf)

WA inquiry into hydraulic fracturing for Unconventional Gas

[http://dea.org.au/images/uploads/submissions/WA Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracturing - UG Submission 09-13.pdf](http://dea.org.au/images/uploads/submissions/WA_Inquiry_into_Hydraulic_Fracturing_-_UG_Submission_09-13.pdf)

NSW State Environmental Planning Policy on Mining, Petroleum Production and Extractive Industries Amendment

[http://dea.org.au/images/uploads/submissions/NSW SEPP Amendment-CSG 2013 11-13 .pdf](http://dea.org.au/images/uploads/submissions/NSW_SEPP_Amendment-CSG_2013_11-13_.pdf)

Port Waratah Coal Services Terminal 4

[http://dea.org.au/images/uploads/submissions/Port Waratah Terminal 4 Submission 11-13.pdf](http://dea.org.au/images/uploads/submissions/Port_Waratah_Terminal_4_Submission_11-13.pdf)

Clean Energy Legislation (Carbon Tax repeal) Bill

[http://dea.org.au/images/uploads/submissions/Clean Energy Legislation Submission 11-13.pdf](http://dea.org.au/images/uploads/submissions/Clean_Energy_Legislation_Submission_11-13.pdf)

Draft DPEMP for the Langloh Coal Mine

[http://dea.org.au/images/uploads/submissions/Langloh Mine Submission 11-13.pdf](http://dea.org.au/images/uploads/submissions/Langloh_Mine_Submission_11-13.pdf)

Targets and Progress Review Draft Report

[http://dea.org.au/images/uploads/submissions/Targets and Progress Review Submission 11-13.pdf](http://dea.org.au/images/uploads/submissions/Targets_and_Progress_Review_Submission_11-13.pdf)

Carmichael Coal Mine and Rail Project SEIS

[http://dea.org.au/images/uploads/submissions/Carmichael Coal Mine and Rail Project SEIS Submission 12-13.pdf](http://dea.org.au/images/uploads/submissions/Carmichael_Coal_Mine_and_Rail_Project_SEIS_Submission_12-13.pdf)

Alcoa of Australia application for Electricity Generation License for Anglesea Power Station

[http://dea.org.au/images/uploads/submissions/Anglesea Electricity License Submission 12-13.pdf](http://dea.org.au/images/uploads/submissions/Anglesea_Electricity_License_Submission_12-13.pdf)

Enquiry into the Government's Direct Action Plan

[http://dea.org.au/images/uploads/submissions/Direct Action Plan Submission 01-14.pdf](http://dea.org.au/images/uploads/submissions/Direct_Action_Plan_Submission_01-14.pdf)

Great Barrier Reef Strategic Assessment

[http://dea.org.au/images/uploads/submissions/Great Barrier Reef Strategic Assessment Submission 01-14.pdf](http://dea.org.au/images/uploads/submissions/Great_Barrier_Reef_Strategic_Assessment_Submission_01-14.pdf)

Energy White Paper – Issue Paper

[http://dea.org.au/images/uploads/submissions/EWP - Issue Paper Submission 02-14.pdf](http://dea.org.au/images/uploads/submissions/EWP_-_Issue_Paper_Submission_02-14.pdf)

New Acland Coal Mine – Stage 3 project – EIS

[http://dea.org.au/images/uploads/submissions/Acland Stage 3 EIS Submission 02-14.pdf](http://dea.org.au/images/uploads/submissions/Acland_Stage_3_EIS_Submission_02-14.pdf)

Senate Inquiry into Public Transport

[http://dea.org.au/images/uploads/submissions/Public Transport Submission 02-14.pdf](http://dea.org.au/images/uploads/submissions/Public_Transport_Submission_02-14.pdf)

Victorian Inquiry into the impact of Carbon Tax on Health Services

[http://dea.org.au/images/uploads/submissions/DEA Vic Inquiry Carbon Tax HealthservicesSub 02-14.pdf](http://dea.org.au/images/uploads/submissions/DEA_Vic_Inquiry_Carbon_Tax_HealthservicesSub_02-14.pdf)

Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation amendment Bill

[http://dea.org.au/images/uploads/submissions/EPBC Submission - 05-14.pdf](http://dea.org.au/images/uploads/submissions/EPBC_Submission_-_05-14.pdf)

Hydraulic fracturing Inquiry - Northern Territory

[http://dea.org.au/images/uploads/submissions/DEA Hydraulic fracturing in NT inquiry final.pdf](http://dea.org.au/images/uploads/submissions/DEA_Hydraulic_fracturing_in_NT_inquiry_final.pdf)

Inquiry into the Hazelwood Mine Fires

http://dea.org.au/images/uploads/submissions/SO_0162-DOCTORS-FOR-THE-ENVIRONMENT-AUSTRALIA.pdf

High Conservation Values Assessment and Management Plan - Forestry Tasmania

[http://dea.org.au/images/uploads/submissions/Forestry Tasmania HCV Submission 06-14.pdf](http://dea.org.au/images/uploads/submissions/Forestry_Tasmania_HCV_Submission_06-14.pdf)

Communications

Despite the enormous challenges that we face with climate change, much of our media continues to fail us.

It ignores or does a poor job of reporting the effects of environmental damage on people and planet and, when it does, invariably places a disproportionate focus on the economic cost of protection.

DEA's passionate and committed team of volunteer doctors and medical students has over the past 12 months worked exceptionally hard to bring many important topics to the attention of colleagues, politicians and the wider public.

We covered divestment from financial organisations that lend to coal interests; the effects of coal on health; action on climate change; unconventional gas mining; the Port Augusta solar thermal proposal; stronger emissions targets, the coal mine fire in Morwell; closing the Anglesea mine and power station; active transport such as cycling; improving air quality and so on.

As part of our advocacy work, DEA wrote opinion pieces and commentary, media releases and statements; it made presentations to the broader community; and it organised a sell-out iDEA 2014 conference. The event attracted 400 doctors and medical students from all over Australia - the largest turn out in the conference's history - and featured many exceptional speakers, many of whom are leaders in their field.

DEA is very proud of its achievements and of the people who support the organisation.

More strategic direction will see us improve our communications efforts. To this end, we have employed a part-time Media and Communications Officer who will help us grow our message more widely.

Media releases

Port Augusta denied clean energy, 27 July 2013

Doctors and community dismayed by solar thermal proposal for Port Augusta being dropped
<http://dea.org.au/news/article/media-release-port-augusta-denied-clean-energy>

Doctors applaud coal funding cut as positive health measure, 29 July 2013

DEA welcome Friday's announcement of the withdrawal of a \$100 million dollar Federal Government grant to coal development company Dual Gas/HRL.
www.dea.org.au/news/article/doctors-applaud-coal-funding-cut-as-positive-health-measure

Heat related deaths to rise, 1 August 2013

Doctors for the Environment Australia (DEA) is concerned for people's health in a changing climate
<http://dea.org.au/news/article/heat-related-deaths-to-rise>

Proposal to fast track NSW mining carries health risks, 13 August 2013

Doctors say the NSW government plans to turn its back on communities by ensuring mining projects are approved regardless of potential health impacts.
<http://dea.org.au/news/article/media-release-proposal-to-fast-track-nsw-mining-carries-health-risks>

Doctors prescribe active transport, 20 September 2013

Doctors and medical students from Doctors for the Environment Australia (DEA) cycling in the lead-up to Bicycle Network Victoria's Ride2Work Day to raise awareness of the health and environmental benefits of cycling.
<http://dea.org.au/news/article/media-release-doctors-prescribe-active-transport>

Stronger emissions target needed to protect health, 30 October 2013

Doctors support the Climate Change Authority's call for a more ambitious emission reduction target.
<http://dea.org.au/news/article/stronger-emissions-target-needed-to-protect-health>

Warming climate threatens health, doctors warn, 14 January 2014

Doctors warning of the dangers of extreme heat, as scorching temperatures continue to affect many areas of Australia.
<http://dea.org.au/news/article/media-release-warming-climate-threatens-health-doctors-warn>

To protect health, 18 February 2014

To protect health, Anglesea mine and coal fired power station should close with Point Henry
<http://dea.org.au/news/article/media-release-to-protect-health>

Doctors concerned by Vic coal-mine fire, 2 March 2014

Doctors at the Morwell rally in Victoria today expressed concern about coal's threat to our health and environment.

<http://dea.org.au/news/article/media-release-doctors-concerned-by-vic-coal-mine-fire>

Doctors alarmed by water contamination from unconventional gas mining, 9 March 2014

Health advocacy organisation, Doctors for the Environment Australia (DEA) is alarmed by water contamination in an aquifer associated with a Santos coal seam gas project in the Pilliga Forest, NSW.

<http://dea.org.au/news/article/media-release-doctors-alarmed-by-water-contamination-from-unconventional-ga>

Australia's doctors gather in Melbourne, demanding stronger action on climate change, 20 March 2014

Doctors for the Environment Australia iDEA14 Conference, Melbourne: 22-23 March 14

<http://dea.org.au/news/article/media-release-australias-doctors-gather-in-melbourne-demanding-stronger-act>

New climate change report critical for health, 31 March 2014

Doctors for the Environment Australia (DEA), welcomes the latest report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) as a call to action on climate change.

<http://dea.org.au/news/article/media-release-new-climate-change-report-critical-for-health>

Doctors urge WA voters to consider climate change, 1 April 2014

Doctors are urging WA to vote for strong action on climate change in light of the latest climate change report showing health at serious risk.

<http://dea.org.au/news/article/media-release-doctors-urge-wa-voters-to-consider-climate-change>

Doctors join 'National Day of Divestment Action', 1 May 2014

Doctors and medical students are calling climate change a 'public health emergency' and urging divestment from fossil fuels nationally

<http://dea.org.au/news/article/media-release-doctors-join-national-day-of-divestment-action-saturday-3-may>

Australian doctors support the British Medical Association, 26 June 2014

<http://dea.org.au/news/article/media-release-26-june-2014>

Medical Observer and DEA collaboration

DEA's authors published two opinion pieces in the widely read Medical Observer (MO) throughout 2013/2014. Since 2009, DEA and MO have obtained mutual benefit in an association involving the provision (by DEA) and publication (by MO) of opinion pieces concerning the effects of the environment on human health and related issues.

The liaison has continued to:

- Provide opinion pieces for Medical Observer for which no payment is accepted.
- Improve DEA's contact with general practitioners across the nation to increase their awareness of environmental issues affecting the health of their patients.

The DEA opinion pieces which were published from July 2013 to June 2014 are:

- *Democracy: essential for health and wellbeing* called on readers in the lead-up to the election to consider whose policies are best going to serve equity and fairness and thus drive better health, whose will best protect the environment on which we depend for our wealth and prosperity, and whose will make a more democratic and

therefore healthy society. *Dr Peter Tait, 13 August 2013*

www.medicalobserver.com.au/news/democracy-essential-for-health-and-wellbeing

- *Promoting change to contain our health costs* made the point that what's good for the environment can also be good for health and good for addressing healthcare's rising costs. Policies, communities, infrastructure and health systems that promote and maintain physical and mental health are desperately needed and that we cannot afford to continue ignoring the predicted co-benefits to human health and health budgets through improved environmental sustainability across multiple sectors. *Dr Eugenie Kayak, 11 October 2013*

www.medicalobserver.com.au/news/promoting-change-to-contain-our-health-costs

All of the DEA opinion pieces have been printed with DEA acknowledged as either the author's affiliation, or the source of the article, together with our web address.

DEA student members



Student membership numbers have continued to grow this year, thanks in part to the hugely successful iDEA14 Conference (page 18). The resulting enthusiasm has led to much activity, assisted by the implementation of monthly national student Skype meetings. These meetings have given state or university representatives a chance to recognise positive achievements, discuss difficulties and share ideas.

Code Green Week

In September 2013, DEA together with the Australian Medical Students' Association (AMSA) held Code Green week, consisting of events aimed to educate, engage and empower medical students and the wider community. The week was launched at the end of the Global Health Conference, with students acting out a hospital scene on the beach to create a visual image of the strains climate change will put on health care systems. Other events included climate change seminars and forums, film screenings and bike rides to promote healthy transport.

Political engagement

Protecting the Renewable Energy Target (RET) and Clean Energy Finance Corporation (CEFC) was a focus for DEA students. Grace Davies, Grace Fitzgerald and Catherine Pendrey sent a letter regarding the public health importance of the RET, CEFC and a price on pollution to the eight senate crossbenchers. The letter was co-signed by AMSA (thus representing over 17,000 medical students).

DEA students also helped to write AMSA's submission to the RET Review. Grace Fitzgerald and Grace Davies wrote an information sheet directing students on how to contact the eight cross-bench senators and local MPs. Natasha Abeysekera also wrote a letter for Senator Lambie showing support for the RET and CEFC, and got over 100 medical students to sign! Members later met with Senator Lambie. Grace Davies wrote a letter requesting

meetings with MPs/Senators regarding the RET. She and the AMSA executive subsequently met with Senator Richard Di Natale.

Divestment

DEA students in each state organised for a group of medical students to attend the National Day of Divestment 2014 along with DEA doctors (page 16).

Students have also made influential contributions to divestment campaigns at various universities. DEA students approached medical student global health groups, medical student societies and AMSA about divestment. **Ignite**, the global health group of the Monash University Medical School, divested from fossil fuels, instigated by Joash Arulprakasam. Also at Monash, academics met to discuss university divestment. At the University of Melbourne, DEA students created an open letter from the health professionals affiliated with the university and have helped with the university's referendum regarding divestment. DEA students at the University of Queensland have also helped to petition the Vice Chancellor to consider university divestment.



States have also organised a number of their own initiatives. Exponential growth in engagement by Victorian students has seen specific projects pursued including engagement with local GP practices, green hospitals, an advocacy workshop and medical curriculum advocacy. Members participated in National Tree Planting Day in Tasmania and WA. NSW State Representatives began a NSW DEA Monthly Newsletter. DEA students achieved incorporation of a climate change lecture into the medical curriculum at their local Adelaide University. Queensland students received a positive response from the head of ethics relating to queries concerning environmental health ethics in the curriculum.

Students also participated in activities organised by other organisations, including the AYCC's Power Shift Summit, screenings of the 350.org 'Do the Math' film, the Global Ideas Forum and Al Gore's Climate Reality Training Project.

Management Committee 2013-2014

The following committee members were elected on September 29, 2013

Professor Kingsley Faulkner – Chair
Professor David Shearman – Secretary
Dr Hakan Yaman – Treasurer
Dr Marion Carey (VIC)
Dr Rohan Church (TAS)
Dr George Crisp (WA)
Grace Davies – Student Representative (elected 23/3/14)
Dr Sallie Forrest (WA)
Dr Eugenie Kayak (VIC)
Dr David King (QLD)
Dr Catherine Pendrey (VIC)
Dr Helen Redmond (NSW)

Corresponding members:

Karin English (QLD)
Dr Kristen Pearson (VIC)
Dr Linda Selvey (WA)
Dr Aaron Tracey

Ex-officio:

Carmela Ferraro – Communications Officer
Joy Oddy – Administration Officer
Merryn Redenbach – Research & Liaison Officer

Scientific Advisory Committee 2013-2014

We are fortunate to have the support of a Scientific Advisory Committee consisting of eminent doctors and scientists and we thank them for their advice and contributions throughout the year.

The members of this committee are:

Professor Stephen Boyden AM
Professor Peter Doherty AC
Professor Bob Douglas AO
Professor Michael Kidd AM
Professor David de Kretser AC
Professor Stephen Leeder AO
Professor Ian Lowe AO
Professor Robyn McDermott
Professor Tony McMichael AO
Professor Peter Newman
Professor Emeritus Sir Gustav Nossal AC

Professor Hugh Possingham
Professor Lawrie Powell AC
Professor Fiona Stanley AC
Dr Rosemary Stanton OAM
Dr Norman Swan
Professor David Yencken AO

Summary of the Treasurer's Report for the financial year 2013-2014

The financial position of DEA has improved compared to the last financial year with an equity movement of \$10,291 and a total equity of \$123,478. This excludes money from a grant and a special donation for which spending has already been committed.

It is also pleasing to report the continuing expansion of our membership base, both of ordinary and student members. The increase in our student members has been striking which augers well for our future, both in terms of activity and financial viability.

But the support of our established members has been just as striking, with many members still present from the early days of DEA inception.

With your demonstrated continued support we can be confident that the financial position of DEA will continue to strengthen.

Please see the Annual Financial Statement (2013-2014) for more details.

Hakan Yaman, Honorary Treasurer

Thank you to our many contributors

A huge thank you to the many people who make Doctors for the Environment Australia what we are today.

Without the generosity of our many volunteers including members, non-members, our ever energetic students and our hard working committees, donating their time, energy and expertise writing submissions, giving media interviews, talks and lectures we would not be able to accomplish the amount we do.

Again, we must thank our Accountant, Cameron Batterham and IT developer, Mark White for another year of support.

We thank everyone who has supported us with financial donations and remind you that tax deductible donations can be made via our website www.dea.org.au/donate.

Publications

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Church R and Briggs D. *Recycling in hospitals*, Tasmanian Health Organisation - North West, various dates 2013.

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Crisp G. *Health impacts of diesel particulate air pollution*, Fremantle Road to Rail Forum, 17 August 2013

Crisp G. *The hidden health costs of coal*, Cardiology – The Lung Club, Subiaco, 12 November 2013

Davies G. *Climate Change and Health*, divestment training, Monash University, 23 April 2014

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King D. *Environment and Health*, lecture, MBBS II students, Ipswich, 15 July 2013

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