



GreenCollege Guidelines

Reducing the Environmental Impact of
your Medical College and Specialty

The Australian health care sector makes up approximately **7% of the country's national carbon footprint**. Medical Colleges have the opportunity to contribute to the preservation of our environmental and planetary health. Leading by example and incorporating changes into the way you operate while recognising the link between environmental change and emerging health impacts, your organisation can make a big difference toward **transforming the health care sector** closer to net zero.

Prompted by commitments to lead and act from the AMA and Medical Colleges, here you will find practical and affordable ideas to make eco-friendly organisational improvements. This GreenCollege Guideline assists to identify simple changes that will save energy and water, reduce waste, equip medical specialists to practice and lead in a carbon/ resource constrained world and help patients and communities to live more sustainable and healthy lives.



Stakeholders and Governance

- Acknowledge that action on climate change is consistent with the College strategy, mission, and values through a statement eg. Colleges that have joined DEA and AMA with a climate emergency [declaration](#)
- Declare a commitment to achieve net zero emissions for all College activity by a specific date
- [Endorse](#) Australian healthcare sector emission reduction targets in line with the AMA, DEA and ANMF (80% by 2030 and net zero by 2040) and [others](#)
- Work with the healthcare industry to improve sustainability in the healthcare supply chain and value based sustainable practices
- Work with the AMC to ensure sustainability (education and activities) can be embedded in college accreditation standards
- Review the College's investment policy and eliminate investment in the fossil fuel industry
- [Review the College's financial institution](#) and consider moving to one that does not continue to support the fossil fuel industry
- [Review the College's insurers](#) and consider moving to a provider that does not continue to underwrite the fossil fuel industry
- Establish a Green Team of champions to address the carbon footprint of the College buildings and activity
- Establish and support a Special Interest Group / network of interested fellows and registrars
- Engage all College staff - clinical and administrative
- Recognise and celebrate successes and achievements in sustainability.



Education

- Incorporate sustainability into specialty trainee curricula and examinations
 - The existing [DEA medical curriculum framework](#) could be used for guidance
 - Emphasise reduction of [low value care](#)
- Develop guidelines for clinicians and healthcare facilities on speciality specific sustainability actions
- Incorporate a sustainability module as a Continual Performance Development (CPD) requirement
- Establish a Sustainable Clinical Fellowship for trainees
- Develop sustainability resources relevant to specialty for patient and public education.



Research & QI

- Promote research and quality improvement in environmental sustainability
- Provide funding for research and quality improvement in environmental sustainability
- Develop/promote an audit tool for clinicians and departments to evaluate environmental impact.

Annual Scientific Meeting (ASM) and Events

- Ensure there is a sustainability session at every ASM
- Minimise the carbon footprint of all college events by engaging with venues that support and consider sustainable energy, catering, hybrid meetings, and digital media
- Ensure the carbon footprint of the ASM is calculated and offset through ticket prices - including emissions associated with travel to and from the conference.

Staff Travel & Emissions

- Encourage broader adoption of virtual meeting services, especially for staff that travel significant distances (including air travel)
- Carbon offset for all travel
- Encourage staff to use active transport for their commute or public transport
- Provide secure bicycle parking/storage
- Provide end-of-trip shower/change facilities for staff - it may be possible to partner with a local gym to provide discount memberships.

Energy Supply

- Explore rooftop solar options for College buildings
- Purchase 'Green Power' for colleges facilities
- Eliminate the use of gas or other fossil fuels for heating, water, & electricity.

Energy Efficiency

- Undertake an energy audit of College buildings to inform future work in reducing energy use
- Reduce draughts by sealing doors and windows and installing automatic doors
- Reduce heat loss by using double glazing windows and insulating walls/ceilings and floors
- Turn off appliances/computers at the end of the day
- Use computers with energy saving settings
- Instal timers or motion sensors for lighting and other power outlets
- Switch to LED lighting
- Avoid 'over-lighting' and turn off lights when rooms not in use/end of day.

Procurement and waste management

- Ensure new and renewed purchasing contracts include environmental and social considerations
- When negotiating equipment upgrades/ contracts, request vendors take back old equipment for refurbishment and donation, or request vendor use a certified sustainable electronics recycling vendor
- Consider energy efficiency ratings when installing automatic doors, purchasing appliances (such as refrigerators and dishwashers) and hot water services
- Use recycled products, such as paper and toner cartridges, as much as possible
- Replace plastic cups with cups made from recycled paper or using washable cups.

Waste Management & Recycling

- Undertake waste management audit to inform further diversion from landfill
- Place recycling bins in offices – either in each room or in a common area
- Ensure recycling bins are not contaminated with nonrecyclable waste
- Maximise recycling eg., batteries, light globes, soft plastic via [REDcycle](#)
- Remove all non-recycling bins and work toward 'zero waste'.

Electronics

- Reduce consumption of electronic devices and repair broken equipment before purchasing new items
- Reuse electronic devices by donating items to charity, friends or family
- Use a certified sustainable electronics recycling vendor to dispose of old equipment.

Paper

- Avoid any unnecessary printing
- Set printers to default double-side printing and 'quick print' to save both paper and ink
- Switch to e-version of College magazines/ bulletins
- Move towards all electronic records where possible.

Water

- Ensure water heater is working as efficiently as possible
- Switch from gas to electric hot water heating
- Use low flow taps
- Only run dishwashers when full
- Install water efficient toilets
- Encourage staff to consume tap water over bottled water - install a water fountain
- Invest in rainwater tanks or greywater systems.

Further Resources

Neil Arya, Jean Zigby, Jasmine Mah, Lisa Jing Mu, Lynn Marshall, Linda Varangu, et al. Green Office Toolkit: For Clinicians and Office Managers Canada: Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment; 2018 [Cited April 2022]. Available from: greenhealthcare.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Green-Office-Toolkit-2018-print.pdf

Royal Australasian College of General Practitioners. Factsheet: Reducing the Environmental Impact of a General Practice [Cited April 2022]. Available from: www.racgp.org.au/FSDEDEV/media/documents/Running%20a%20practice/Security/Reducing-the-environmental-impact.pdf

NPS MedicineWise. Choosing Wisely Australia: NPS MedicineWise; [Cited April 2022]. Available from: www.choosingwisely.org.au

Wiser Healthcare. Wiser Carbon Neutral [Cited April 2022]. Available from: www.wiserhealthcare.org.au/wiser-carbon-neutral



Doctors for the Environment Australia (DEA) is an independent, self-funded, non-governmental organisation of medical doctors and students in all Australian states and territories. We work to address the public health impacts from damage to our natural environment such as climate change, which will increasingly undermine our health and our healthcare services if we fail to act.

We are supported by a distinguished Scientific Advisory Committee:

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Doctors for the Environment Australia acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which this report has been produced. We recognise that First Nations peoples have cared for Country for millennia and seek to learn from Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing. We acknowledge that sovereignty of this land was never ceded and pay our respects to First Nations Elders past and present, and to emerging leaders.

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