

Australasian College for Emergency Medicine



## **Australian doctors call for more leadership from governments and the healthcare sector for urgent action on climate change to protect health.**

**9 August 2022**

Doctors have been directly confronted by the health impacts of climate change in the past few years. The 2019-20 bushfire season caused widespread devastation still being felt today. This year, we have witnessed unprecedented and devastating floods in QLD and NSW. These acute climate events caused deaths, injury, infection, mental ill-health, and has impacted food security. Events such as these show there is a real human cost to a changing climate. The time to act is now.

Australian medical leaders acknowledge the extreme risk posed by climate change both to global health and to the health of all Australians, and our duty of care to act urgently. This

was affirmed through the joint webinar *Climate change and sustainability: leadership and action from Australian doctors* hosted by the Australian Medical Association and Doctors for the Environment on 9 August 2022. Healthcare needs to address its own significant emissions (estimated to be 7 per cent of Australia's total greenhouse gas emissions), which can only be achieved through commitment from the whole health sector and government.

The AMA, DEA, and medical specialist colleges have led advocacy amongst the medical profession for stronger action on climate change. We are calling on all Australian Governments to recognise the impacts of climate change on health and take action to address it.

The signatories to this statement support:

1. A net zero Australian healthcare system by 2040 with majority of emission cuts by 2030.
2. The development of a national climate change and health strategy to facilitate planning for climate health impacts, which the federal government has committed to.
3. Establishing a National Sustainable Healthcare Unit to support environmentally sustainable practice in healthcare and reduce the sector's own emissions.
4. Education of current and future doctors to:
  - a. be well equipped to care for patients and populations impacted by the adverse health effects of climate change, and
  - b. provide sustainable health care to support sector-wide emissions reduction.
5. Collaboration on climate change mitigation strategies with populations most at risk of climate-related adverse health impacts, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

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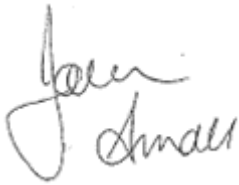
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