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## **Australian doctors call for increased investment in sustainable healthcare and urgent action on climate change to protect health**

**12 September 2023**

Australia and the world are experiencing, with escalating frequency and severity, the adverse health impacts of climate change. Australia's leading doctors call on all Australian governments and the healthcare sector to prioritise climate mitigation and adaptation policies to protect the health of present and future generations.

The Australian Medical Association and Doctors for the Environment Australia's annual webinar *Australia's doctors – driving action on climate change* brings together medical colleges to report on activities underway across the medical profession to embed sustainability and reduce emissions in healthcare. It demonstrates the willingness of the medical colleges to work towards this goal, to protect the health of the Australian people.

At this year's webinar held 12 September 2023, presenters acknowledged the urgent need for the Australian healthcare sector to act by prioritising the transition away from greenhouse gas emissions and rapidly reducing the healthcare sector's carbon footprint.

The rate of global heating and climate change is predominantly caused by greenhouse gases. The resultant human health costs are rapidly rising, with ever increasing morbidity and mortality associated with heat waves, extreme weather events and other climate health impacts, both in Australia and across the globe.

Reducing greenhouse gas emissions and transitioning to renewable energy sources will have immediate health benefits through reducing pollution and many illnesses, as well as mitigating

against future health impacts of climate change. It is also imperative that all levels of government act decisively and with urgency to prevent and address climate related mental health issues.

The AMA, DEA, and the undersigned medical colleges, commend the federal government for establishing a National Health Sustainability and Climate Unit within the Department of Health and Aged Care. We now urge the federal government to provide the necessary policies and support to enable the healthcare sector to be a leader in sustainable health care. The health of Australians depends on it.

The signatories to this statement support:

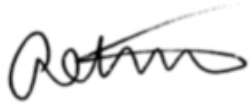
- a net zero healthcare system by 2040 with the majority of greenhouse gas emission cuts by 2030
- adequate capacity and capability of the National Health Sustainability and Climate Unit to enable delivery of an effective National Health and Climate Strategy
- incorporation of climate health impacts and sustainable healthcare principles into the education curriculum requirements for all levels of medical professionals, from medical students to specialists
- the clinician's role as advocate to protect their patients against the health impacts of climate change
- meaningful consultation and collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to develop a climate resilient, sustainable healthcare system and climate change mitigation strategies
- a "Health in All Policies" approach that maximises the synergies between good climate policy, health policy and the wider determinants of health.



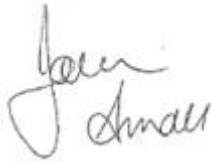
Dr John Van Der Kallen  
Chair, Doctors for the Environment Australia



Professor Steve Robson  
AMA President



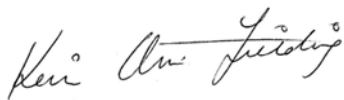
Dr Adriene Lee  
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