

## Climate Health WA Inquiry

### About your submission

Are you responding on behalf of an organisation or group?

No

Yes

If yes, please identify the organisation:

### Your contact details

The following information will not be published without your permission but enables the Inquiry to contact you about your submission if required.

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### Publication of submissions

Submissions will be published with the name of the submitter unless otherwise indicated below. Do you consent to be identified in the published submission?

Yes, I / my organisation agree to be identified

No, I / my organisation request to remain anonymous

### Terms of Reference

You are encouraged to address at least ONE of the Terms of Reference as listed below. Please select which item/s you will address:

1. Establish current knowledge on the implications of climate change for health in Western Australia (WA) and recommend a framework for evaluating future implications.

2. Identify and recommend a program of work to manage the implications of climate change for health in WA, which will protect the public from the harmful health impacts of climate change.

3. Identify and recommend a program of work to manage the implications of climate change for health in WA, which will strengthen the preparedness and resilience of communities and health services against extreme weather events, with a focus on the most vulnerable in the community.

4. Identify and recommend a program of work to manage the implications of climate change for health in WA, which will reduce the contribution of WA health services to climate change and other detrimental impacts.
5. Identify and recommend a program of work to manage the implications of climate change for health in WA, which will enable WA Health services to implement change, including energy efficiency, to a more sustainable model.
6. Evaluate the likely benefits (health and wellbeing, social and economic) arising from climate change mitigation strategies, with a focus on WA health services.
7. Define the role of the Department of Health in leading public policy on climate change and health.
8. Recommend the Terms of Reference, scope and preferred methods for undertaking a climate change vulnerability assessment for the health sector.
9. Recommend the Terms of Reference, scope and preferred methods for developing a Climate Change Adaptation Plan for the health sector.

### Submissions response field

**Please type your response to the item(s) selected above into the field below. Alternatively you may provide your submission as a separate attachment (suggested maximum 5 pages).**

#### Climate Health WA Inquiry – Public Submission

Establishing current knowledge on the implications of the climate crisis for health in Western Australia (WA)

- Current knowledge should be sourced from reputable scientific bodies, including national and international bodies such as the IPCC, WHO and CSIRO.
- Knowledge should be evidence based.
- Frameworks for gathering knowledge should account for the least conservative estimates of the impacts of climate so as to prepare for the worst possible impacts of the climate crisis.
- Frameworks should constantly investigate economical, equitable, innovative technological solutions.

Identifying and recommending a program of work to manage the implications of the climate crisis for health in WA, which will strengthen the preparedness of communities and health services against extreme weather events, with a focus on the most vulnerable in communities

- The Department should appoint a committee of experts and dedicated individuals whose sole purpose is to plan for and mitigate the harms to health induced by the climate crisis.
- The Department should allocate resources and train service providers to immediately respond to violent weather events such as cyclones, floods and fires and have comprehensive response action plans which are ready to deploy at a moment's notice.
- The Department should allocate resources to educate and train individuals and

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families in affected communities on how to best prepare themselves for crises and natural disasters.

- The Department should focus on programs that allow lower SES individuals and individuals affected by homelessness to relocate in the event of a natural disaster.
- In the event that mass-relocation will be necessary, the Department should make a special effort to engage with the local Indigenous and Aboriginal communities in the affected areas to ensure cultural security is preserved as much as possible.
- The Department must commit to improving long-term health infrastructure to improve accessibility of vital health services (including mental health services) to vulnerable and marginalised groups and individuals.

Reducing the contributions of WA health services to climate change and environmental destruction

- Department of Health should set a target for net negative greenhouse emissions on all department operations (including but not limited to all offices, hospitals and primary health centres) by 2025.
- The Department should allocate extensive resources, including the consultation of climate and energy experts on how to most effectively adopt clean, renewable energy and energy efficiency strategies.
- The Department should implement measures to drastically reduce water consumption and the usage of single-use plastics, including training all staff on how to better use and manage resources and equipment to reduce waste and water consumption in their day-to-day practices.
- The Department must source local vendors for supplies and equipment to reduce greenhouse emissions from the transport of supplies.
- The Department should train all staff in 'Climate Awareness' to spread ongoing education and awareness of the climate crisis and its impacts on local, national and international health.
- The Department must completely and publicly divest from all fossil fuel interests and ensure all future contracts are made with environmentally responsible bodies.

By adopting the above measures, the Department of Health will see several benefits including but not limited to:

- A reduction in energy and water costs due to the reduced cost of renewable energy and the reduced consumption of energy and water.
- A reduction in waste due to better resource management.
- Increased trust from the community that it is taking measures to protect its health and welfare.

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Defining the role of the Department of Health in leading public policy on climate change and health

The Department of Health consists of dedicated healthcare workers and professionals who hold a significant amount of trust from the communities they serve. There is significant potential to utilise this trust to communicate the truth regarding the causes and consequences of the climate crisis and influencing policy and discourse around global warming.

- The Department must declare a climate and health emergency to build pressure on other bodies, groups and individuals to take immediate action to tackle the climate crisis.
- The Department should advocate for larger scale policies and solutions such as a carbon fee and dividend and the uptake of electric transport (which also has direct implications on health as it would lead to positive outcomes in air pollution, urban planning and mental health).
- The Department must issue public statements on dangerous environmental practices such as fracking and coal and LNG exports as they compromise global and Western Australian health outcomes.
- The Department must immediately launch public health campaigns clearly stating the detrimental impacts of climate change for the health of individuals and communities (similar to those for smoking and alcohol) to capture the hearts and minds of individuals and empower them to take action both within their own households and day-to-day activities but also in advocating for larger scale social and political action.
  - The Department may consider consulting with public relations, marketing and advertising specialists on how to most effectively implement these campaigns.

**Please complete this sheet and submit with any attachments to: Climate Health WA Inquiry**