

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: Millennium Kids Inc

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The following information will not be published without your permission but enables the Inquiry to contact you about your submission if required.

First name

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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).

For the last five years young people have gone beyond raising concerns about climate change, to stressing the impact inaction on climate change and a fear of a world where climate change rolls out unchecked, has on their mental health and well being. Through workshops and activities in both the Perth metropolitan area and regional Western Australia Millennium Kids gathered anecdotal evidence of this growing anxiety around climate change. It is important to note through our co design process we do not seek to discuss climate change. We ask children and young people what the big issues are. In 99% of workshops climate change and the impact of climate change and their future, is raised.

Millennium Kids sought a conversation with the Medical Faculty at University of Western Australia to see whether some research could be undertaken on the impact of climate change and well being on young people.

Two Medical Faculty students undertook a survey of 100 young people and presented their findings in a report Young People of Australia; Perceptions, Climate and Concerns

See attached.

- 96% of the participants interviewed considered climate change to be a serious problem.
- 70% of the participants didn't think people took their opinions on climate change seriously.
- 60% of the respondents do not think that the Australian government adequately acknowledges climate change as a serious problem, and do not believe the government is committed to tackling this issue.

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- 89% of the overall responses agreed that they are worried about the effects of climate change.

Although this is but a small sample of the opinions of young people it is the starting point for further research. Already Oxford University and Monash University have picked up on the study and are designing the next stage of research based on a bigger sample.

But the research only supports the assertion that young people are worried about climate change. The recent school strikes are an example of the young people's frustrations at a government, both state and federal, that are not taking their concerns seriously. Kids are calling it a climate emergency. They are no longer using global warming as a term. They are starting to use the new term global heading.

If any adult spoke to these young people you would hear the words 'anxious', 'concerned about my future', 'loss of biodiversity', 'depressed'.

The report *Young People of Australia; Perceptions, Climate and Concerns* raises questions about how we deal with these issues:

- Does the way we teach empower or disempower young people when learning about climate change?
- How will young people be included in co design of these initiatives?
- How do we work as a community to address mental health, provide activities that increase mental health and well being, creating a resilient, adaptable society
- How will the medical profession be trained and prepared for an increase in young people who present at their offices with anxiety and depression?
- How will doctors be prepared to answer their questions and concerns about this global issue?
- How will the Department of Health manage this?
- Who is responsible for ensuring medical training institutions are preparing trainee doctors for an influx of mental health issues?

Attachments

The following documents were provided as attachments to the submission

- Young People of Australia and Climate Change: Perceptions and Concerns. Available from: <https://www.millenniumkids.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Young-People-and-Climate-Change.pdf>
- Millennium Kids Youth Challenges on the Environment 2019. Available from: <https://www.millenniumkids.com.au/youth-challenges-on-the-environment-2019/>

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