

Health at heart of climate response: new report from *The Lancet*

Australia's peak body for health promotion has applauded the release of major new research published in renowned journal *The Lancet* that says we have underestimated the enormity of the consequences of inaction on climate change to our health.

The Australian Health Promotion Association (AHPA) is calling for policymakers to take heed of the recommendations outlined in the *Lancet Commission on Health and Climate 2015* which would see better health through investment in public health and climate change research, transition to greener cities to support and promote lifestyles that are healthy for people and the planet and reviewing the cost savings from preventing poor health through action on climate change.

The previous *Lancet Commission* released in 2009 asserted that climate change was the biggest global health threat of the 21st century. AHPA's National President Gemma Crawford says however that with the release of the new Commission we can see that climate change is now also our greatest global health opportunity.

"Efforts by health promoters to address social determinants of health and to achieve environmental sustainability may be significantly undermined by inaction on climate change."

"Strong evidence-informed action on climate change is our opportunity to improve health on an unprecedented scale. According to this landmark Commission, our strategies to mitigate and adapt to climate change will have significant positive health outcomes including reducing the incidence and prevalence of non-communicable diseases" Ms Crawford said.

Along with vector-borne diseases and extreme weather events, food security, mental health, and air and water quality are serious challenges for the promotion and protection of health posed by a changing climate. AHPA supports the findings from the Commission that show that taking action on climate change can see a number of immediate health gains including more active transport, reduced pollution and a reduction in the consumption of red meat for example.

"We are in this together. This is a key issue for health promotion practitioners. Climate change does and will impact on the work we do and the people we serve" said Ms Crawford.

"Here is a clear pathway for action on climate change and health. This government must demonstrate leadership and act on these recommendations with urgency."

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More information:

The Lancet Commission on Health and Climate 2015 <http://climatehealthcommission.org/>

The Australian Health Promotion Association represents individuals and organisations across Australia involved in the practice, research and study of health promotion. www.healthpromotion.org.au

AHPA is a member of the Climate and Health Alliance which also has an online campaign [Protect Health through Climate Action](#).

For more information on climate and health see: [Our Uncashed Dividend: The Health Benefits of Climate Action](#) published by the Climate and Health Alliance and The Climate Institute.