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HEALTH
ALLIANCE

MEDIA RELEASE

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Health groups welcome ALP renewable energy target, but more needed

The ALP announcement that the party will take a policy to encourage a greater proportion of renewable energy to the next federal election has been welcomed by health groups.

The proposal for 50% of Australia's energy supply to come from renewable energy by 2030 was potentially an important health initiative, Dr Liz Hanna, President of the Climate and Health Alliance said.

"Shifting to an energy system powered by wind and solar power will help reduce many of the health risks associated with coal and oil and gas, particularly in relation to largely invisible, but dangerous, air pollution," Dr Hanna said.

"However the target will not in and of itself deliver the required investment to achieve this goal. This is an opportunity to deliver real health gains through co-benefits. We hope the ALP will now consult expert groups, including the Climate and Health Alliance, to develop the policies to achieve this goal, and to maximize the health benefits.

"Important health and medical care decisions concerning human life are based on the best available scientific evidence, and applied to the specific characteristic of the patient. We expect the same level of evidence to be applied to Australia's important climate and energy policy decisions. Australia's health is at stake."

"There is good evidence that economic measures such as a price on carbon discourage carbon emissions and also deliver health gains."

A recent study by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) found shifting away from coal, oil and gas for power generation and transport offers huge health benefits for local populations and significant savings for national budgets.¹

Dr Hanna said: "Reduction of carbon pollution from the energy and transport sectors is urgent from a climate perspective and will also reduce harmful local air pollution and adverse health impacts such as heart disease and respiratory illnesses as well as reducing the long term harmful effects of global warming."

The Climate and Health Alliance is advocating for a [comprehensive suite of policies to deliver deep and rapid emissions reductions across all sectors](#) to protect people's health from climate change, and will work with all political parties to achieve this.

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¹ Resutek, A. "Cutting Emissions Pays for Itself", News Release, MIT Joint Program on the Science and Policy of Global Change, 25 August 2014. Available at: http://globalchange.mit.edu/news-events/news/news_id/402#.VQJL0SkRFUQ