



**MEDIA RELEASE**

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## **Obama proclamation on climate change and health puts Australia on notice**

The leadership demonstrated by the Obama administration this week in announcing a series of measures on climate change and health is sorely needed in Australia, health groups said today.

US President Barack Obama has committed to protecting the health of communities from climate change, with a comprehensive suite of new initiatives announced during US National Public Health Week.

“These measures amount to some of the most significant efforts by any government to respond to the health impacts of climate change,” Dr Liz Hanna, President of the Climate and Health Alliance said.

The White House will host a Climate Change and Health Summit later this year; workshops will equip communities with science based tools and information; and a draft Climate Change Health Assessment will assess observed and future impacts of climate change on human health in the United States.

Other initiatives include a new report from the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention which will document successful efforts by states and cities to address the health impacts of climate change; a coalition of Deans from medical, public health and nursing schools will develop programs to educate health professionals on climate impacts; the National Data Initiative will expand to include health datasets; and a healthcare facilities toolkit will help support climate resilient healthcare infrastructure.

“This long overdue recognition of the effect of climate change on communities by the Obama administration is welcome,” Dr Hanna said, “but highlights the vacant space for policy in this country. We have no national initiatives to protect health from climate change, nor any plans to develop any. There are no consistent efforts by policymakers to build resilience in the health care sector to ensure services continue to be available during extreme weather events, and very little research is being funded to evaluate climate impacts on health in Australia.”

“The people of Australia are being let down by governments failing to act on scientific evidence,” Dr Hanna said. “We urge the federal government to follow Obama’s lead, and stop ignoring these risks – we must act to protect the health of Australian communities, and manage these risks – this includes ensuring health services are there when we need them.”

The Climate and Health Alliance is a coalition of 28 health care organisations – for a list of members and more information see [www.caha.org.au](http://www.caha.org.au)

For more details on the White House announcements see: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/04/07/fact-sheet-administration-announces-actions-protect-communities-impacts->

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