



CLIMATE^{AND}
HEALTH
ALLIANCE

Federal budget an investment in climate and health damages Media release

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The first federal budget from the Abbott government has failed to set a course for a healthy prosperous and sustainable future, the Climate and Health Alliance (CAHA) said today.

While the federal Treasurer Joe Hockey has claimed all Australians have to do some 'heavy lifting' to get the budget back into surplus, CAHA is alarmed at the removal of important policies with health, social and environmental benefits, while corporate subsidies for polluting industries are retained or expanded.

CAHA President Dr Liz Hanna said: "The budget would be better served if the federal government reversed its decision to scrap policies such as a price on carbon pollution, or by taxing the profits of mining companies."

"The real sources of wealth in a community are the health and wellbeing of people and the health of the natural systems that support human life. By walking away from climate action, and scrapping important environmental initiatives, this government is imposing enormous economic, social and environmental burdens on the community. These will compromise those that already suffer ill-health or are less well off, as well as impose unjustified and avoidable burdens on future generations."

The abolition of the Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA), established to boost the rollout of affordable renewable energy; scrapping of \$10 billion Clean Energy Finance Corporation; and plans to remove the carbon price are all working in the opposite direction to what is needed for future health and wealth of Australians. These policies will actively worsen the health of Australians, Dr Hanna said.

"There is billions of dollars worth of subsidies being provided to companies that produce large quantities of pollution, including carbon emissions, that pose health risks to people now and harm the prospects of future generations by promoting further climate change."

Large cuts to health and aid budgets are being made to direct revenue to big carbon polluters from the Emissions Reduction Fund, in which high emitting companies will be paid to cut emissions.

"This is a very perverse approach to delivering necessary and urgent emissions reductions – harmful emissions should carry a financial penalty, not an incentive," Dr Hanna said.

"Instead of investing in clean renewable energy which can provide thousands of jobs in struggling rural and regional areas, lower the nation's carbon footprint and reduce health risks associated with air pollution, the federal government is offering handouts to polluting industries, subsidising fossil fuel use, adding new subsidies for exploration, and cutting funds for science, innovation and health care services."

"This budget is a missed opportunity in a rapidly closing window of time to prepare Australia for a strong healthy and sustainable economic future."

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