



CLIMATE AND
HEALTH
ALLIANCE

Health and wellbeing the winners in the emerging low carbon world

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The [latest IPCC report](#) points to the significant gains possible for improving health and wellbeing in the emerging low carbon world, the Climate and Health Alliance said today.

As the scientific evidence of harm to land, coastlines, infrastructure, economies and people from climate change mounts, the health benefits associated with low carbon buildings, transport and energy systems is increasingly evident, CAHA Convenor Fiona Armstrong said.

“The good news about the transition to low carbon that is underway in cities across the world, is that it is becoming clear that climate strategies such as weatherproofing our homes and buildings against extreme heat and extreme cold also provides a healthier environment,” Ms Armstrong said.

The World Health Organisation series on [Health in the Green Economy](#) shows that large, immediate health benefits are available from climate strategies, especially those in the housing, energy and transport sectors.

“Insulating homes and buildings not only reduces emissions through reducing energy demand, but it provides health benefits. Minimising fluctuations in temperature prevents premature deaths, as well as reducing the incidence of heart disease, asthma, respiratory disease and stroke,” Ms Armstrong said.

Some of the biggest gains for health and wellbeing come from strategies in the transport sector, especially when urban planning prioritises active and public forms of transport over emissions intensive and sedentary transport options such as private cars.

“Much of the 21st century health burden comes from lifestyle diseases, such as cardiovascular disease, obesity, and diabetes, associated with inactivity,” Ms Armstrong said.¹ “Many significant health problems affecting people today can be prevented or eliminated by increasing daily physical activity. This is not only better for individuals’ health, but it reduces demand on health services and health sector budgets, and it lowers carbon emissions and air pollution as well.”

Other health benefits associated with climate strategies that reduce air pollution include reduced respiratory disease, asthma and lung cancer. A recent review of the economic value of health co-benefits from cleaner air suggest an average benefit of \$46 per tonne of CO₂ avoided.

¹ Obesity costs the Australian economy \$120 billion each year – see [link](#).

“This new report complements what the health and medical literature already suggests: when we account for the harm to health from the current carbon intensive economy, the transformation to a low-carbon society will deliver economic benefits that will outstrip the costs of transition.

“We can move to cleaner, healthier energy and transport systems, and create healthier living and working environments by moving away from fossil fuels – all of which will deliver immediate financial savings through the benefits to health, while the climate benefits will accumulate in the longer term,” Ms Armstrong said.



Graphic: *Our Uncashed Dividend: The Health Benefits of Climate Action*

For more information, see www.caha.org.au for [*Our Uncashed Dividend: The Health Benefits of Climate Action*](#).

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