



Media release

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Climate change to cause significant loss of life: health research and policy forum

Participants at a [Forum on Climate and Health](#) have released a Joint Statement declaring climate change an issue of national and global significance - and called on the Australia Government to develop a national strategy to respond to the serious and increasing health risks from climate change.

The Forum, organized by 27 health and medical groups under the umbrella of the Climate and Health Alliance, heard from some of Australia's leading health and medical researchers, policy experts and public health leaders, and led to the development of a Joint Statement signed by participants calling for individuals, organisations, communities, businesses and governments to shift investment away from fossil fuels, and for stronger action on climate change and greater investment in environmental protection.

Forum presenter and Climate and Health Alliance President Dr Liz Hanna said global heat exposure deaths in the last decade had risen 2300% on the previous decade and the projected global average temperature rise of four degrees was "incompatible with human life".

Dr Hanna will travel to Warsaw in Poland this week to give a keynote address at the [Global Climate and Health Summit](#) being held in parallel with the United Nations climate change negotiations. The Australian Government has indicated it will not be sending a Minister to the talks, and has announced its intention to reduce its current commitment to emissions reductions, despite Australia already lagging behind many nations including the US, and against the advice of the national Climate Change Authority.

The Joint Statement from participants at the Forum said: "climate change has the potential to cause significant loss of life," and pointed to the burning of coal and gas as a significant contributor to both climate change and causing harm to the health of people in Australia and around the world right now.

The lack of health and medical research into climate change was also a serious concern for participants, since the National Health and Medical Research Council spends less than a quarter of one percent of all its research funding on projects with any connection to climate change.

The Joint Statement from the Forum can be found [here](#). **Media contact:** To interview Forum speakers or participants (see [Program](#) for details), contact Fiona Armstrong convenor@caha.org.au or 04389 00 005.