



CLIMATE AND
HEALTH
ALLIANCE

MEDIA RELEASE

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Baillieu is wrong: the carbon price will be good for health

The national coalition of health care groups, the Climate and Health Alliance, today responded to comments by the Victorian Premier Ted Baillieu who has asserted that the federal government carbon price policy would be bad for health.

CAHA Convenor Fiona Armstrong said the health effects of climate change would have a far greater detrimental impact on the health of Victorians than the carbon price.

“Victorians have already experienced serious adverse consequences of climate change in terms of public health and the failure to take effective action to reduce emissions puts many lives at risk,” Ms Armstrong said.

A single heatwave in the state of Victoria in January 2009 saw a 62% increase in deaths, from both direct heat related illnesses and worsening of chronic medical conditions. The Victorian Department of Human Services reported that during this five day event, ambulances had a 46% increase in demand; emergency departments experienced an eight-fold increase in heat related presentations; a 2.8 fold increase in cardiac arrests; and a threefold increase in patients dead on arrival.

The Climate and Health Alliance urges the Premier and the Victorian government to support the policy being proposed by the federal government as it represents an important public health measure.

“Climate change represents a significant threat to public health, and the adverse health effects from climate change will eclipse every other risk to health if we fail to take effective action to cut emissions,” Ms Armstrong said.

“The carbon pricing package as announced by the government represents an important first step in developing a responsible climate policy for Australia and is itself an important public health measure,” Ms Armstrong said.

The costs of reducing emissions were very modest now compared to what would be much higher costs with every year that we delay action, Ms Armstrong said.

There were also many health benefits possible from effective action on climate change, according to the Climate and Health Alliance.

“Not only will we reduce the adverse health effects from climate change, but we can realise other important co-benefits, such as preventing respiratory and cardiovascular diseases by shifting to clean renewable energy generation systems,” Ms Armstrong said.

CAHA members include: Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW); Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM); Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS); Australian Hospitals and Healthcare Association (AHHA); Australian Health Promotion Association (AHPA); Australian Institute of Health Innovation (AIHI); Australian Women’s Health Network (AWHN); Australian Nursing Federation (ANF); Australian Psychological Society; Australian Rural Health Education Network (ARHEN); CRANApplus; Doctors for the Environment Australia (DEA); Doctors Reform Society; Friends of CAHA; Health Consumers’ Network (Qld); Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA); Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP); North Yarra Community Health (NYCH); Services for Australian Rural and Remote Allied Health (SARRAH); Women’s Health in the North; World Vision.

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