



CLIMATE AND
HEALTH
ALLIANCE

MEDIA RELEASE

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Carbon package a good start but more needed

Health groups across Australia have welcomed the package on climate policy announced by the Prime Minister in Canberra yesterday and called on Australians to support the package in the nation's long term interests.

"The health and wellbeing of the Australian and global community depends on taking effective action on climate change," said Fiona Armstrong, Convenor of the national coalition of health groups, the Climate and Health Alliance (CAHA).

"The package as announced on Sunday represents an important first step in developing a responsible climate policy for Australia," Ms Armstrong said.

"It is an improvement on the government's earlier policy of the CPRS and goes beyond the single mechanism of the carbon price with some important and additional measures that will help start Australia's transition to a zero emissions society."

"The development of this package and its passage into law will send an important message to other nations that Australia is creating the foundation for accepting our fair share of the global responsibility to reduce emissions," Ms Armstrong said.

"We know that people in all countries look to what other nations are doing in responding to climate change - so the clear signal that Australia is beginning to take responsibility for its emissions will be a positive influence on the actions of other nations."

"While the commitment to a higher long term target is helpful, it still falls far short of what the scientists are telling us needs to happen, and it is only if effective action is taken now that a long term target can be reached."

Action to cut emissions is affordable now, but the costs will only increase if we delay any longer, Ms Armstrong said.

"It would be morally reprehensible to make a decision to continue to increase emissions now and leave our children to deal with the consequences from our destruction of their natural capital – and denying them future economic security and a stable and civilized society."

Children were already suffering over 80% of the global health burden from climate change,¹ Ms Armstrong said.

However there were 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); CRANAplus; 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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1. Sheffield, P. and Landrigan, P. Environmental Health Perspectives, 119:3, March 2011.