



CLIMATE AND  
HEALTH  
ALLIANCE

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### Health the victim of carbon price fuel exemption

The exemption of fuel from the carbon price legislation is a blow to the nation's health, the Climate and Health Alliance said today.

"It is very disappointing to see media reports today regarding the decision of the Multi Party Climate Change Committee to exempt fuel from the carbon price legislation," Climate and Health Alliance Convenor Fiona Armstrong said today.

"The pollution from burning fossil fuels for transport is responsible for causing significant respiratory and cardiovascular disease in Australia, and costing taxpayers more than \$3 billion<sup>1</sup> a year providing health care to treat these illnesses."

"Nitrogen dioxide, carbon monoxide, and particulate matter are all emitted from motor vehicles in all Australia's major capital cities at levels that are harmful to human health. This is reducing quality of life for many people, and puts vulnerable people at risk of early death."

"There are many health benefits of moving away from fossil fuels for transport, with potential reductions in both heart and lung disease. If active transport is available as an alternative, there are also health gains available through reductions in obesity, diabetes, and depression." Ms Armstrong said.

"Exempting fuels from the carbon price not only denies the community the health benefits of beginning a transition to cleaner, safer transport options, but it also ignores the significant contribution of transport emissions in Australia's greenhouse gas production."

CAHA proposes that increases in fuel costs be offset by compensation for those on low incomes, people in rural areas, and farmers involved in food production, and for governments to dramatically increase investment in public transport to improve transport options and reduce urban dependency on motor vehicles.

"The sooner we create incentives to shift away from fossil fuels the sooner we will see an improvement in public health and a reduction in climate risk. We cannot afford to delay on either."

The Climate and Health Alliance is a national coalition of health care stakeholders established in 2010 to advocate for policy action to reduce the risks to human health from climate change and environmental degradation.

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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<sup>1</sup> Biegler, T. *The hidden costs of electricity: Externalities of power generation in Australia*, 2009, Report for the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering (ATSE). Available online: <http://www.atse.org.au/resource-centre/func-startdown/63>