

Climate and Health Alliance (CAHA)

MEDIA RELEASE

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Healthy benefits from strong action on climate

The Climate and Health Alliance today welcomed a new report from the Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL) and Health Care Without Harm Europe (HCWH E) which demonstrates the very substantial health and economic benefits of strong targets for reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

The report quantifies the climate and health benefits on people's health, health sector budgets and productivity gains possible from the 30% emissions reduction target being considered in Europe.

It reveals the higher the target, the better the outcome for human health, health care budgets and productivity.

CAHA spokesperson Fiona Armstrong said the compelling evidence of the huge boost to public health from strong climate policy was an important message for the new Gillard government that the previous government's 5% emission reductions target was manifestly inadequate.

"This is important work from our international counterparts highlighting the critical link between climate and health policy, and demonstrating that action on climate change is not only vital for human health and wellbeing but it is necessary to ensure the viability of the health care sector and is central to economic productivity," Ms Armstrong said.

"It is time for the Australian Parliament to discuss the setting of emissions reduction targets that are consistent with science of climate change and to establish mechanisms that will achieve them in order to protect human health."

Ms Armstrong said this would mean targets need to be much higher than those discussed in the previous parliament.

"The recommendation of leading scientists is for industrialised countries, including Australia, to cut emissions by 40% of 1990 levels by 2020 in order to prevent the worst impacts of climate change - not 5% below 2000 levels by 2020."

"CAHA calls on the Australian parliament to work together to commit to a strong target for emissions reductions and for this to be made law in this term of government, to ensure our population can benefit from the health gains from cleaner fuels, better transport, and a healthier diet that are all associated with lowering greenhouse emissions."

The Acting Now for Better Health report is available at:

http://noharm.org/lib/downloads/climate/Acting_Now_for_Better_Health.pdf

The Climate and Health Alliance was established in August 2010. It is an alliance of health care stakeholders which includes health care professionals from all disciplines, health care service providers, institutions, academics, researchers, and health care consumers across Australia who wish to see the risk to human health from climate change addressed through prompt policy action.

For more information contact CAHA spokesperson: Fiona Armstrong on 0438 900 005 or visit: <http://climateandhealthalliance.blogspot.com/>