



CLIMATE AND
HEALTH
ALLIANCE

PO Box 523
Camberwell
Victoria 3124

To: Strategic Plan Consultation
c/- Patricia M Faulkner AO, Chair
National Health Performance Authority
MDP 58
GPO Box 9848
Canberra ACT 2601

Dear Ms Faulkner,

Re: National Health Performance Authority public consultation on Review of Strategic Plan 2012-15

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the above. The Climate and Health Alliance is well placed to comment on the plan given our role as a coalition of healthcare stakeholders and diverse membership.

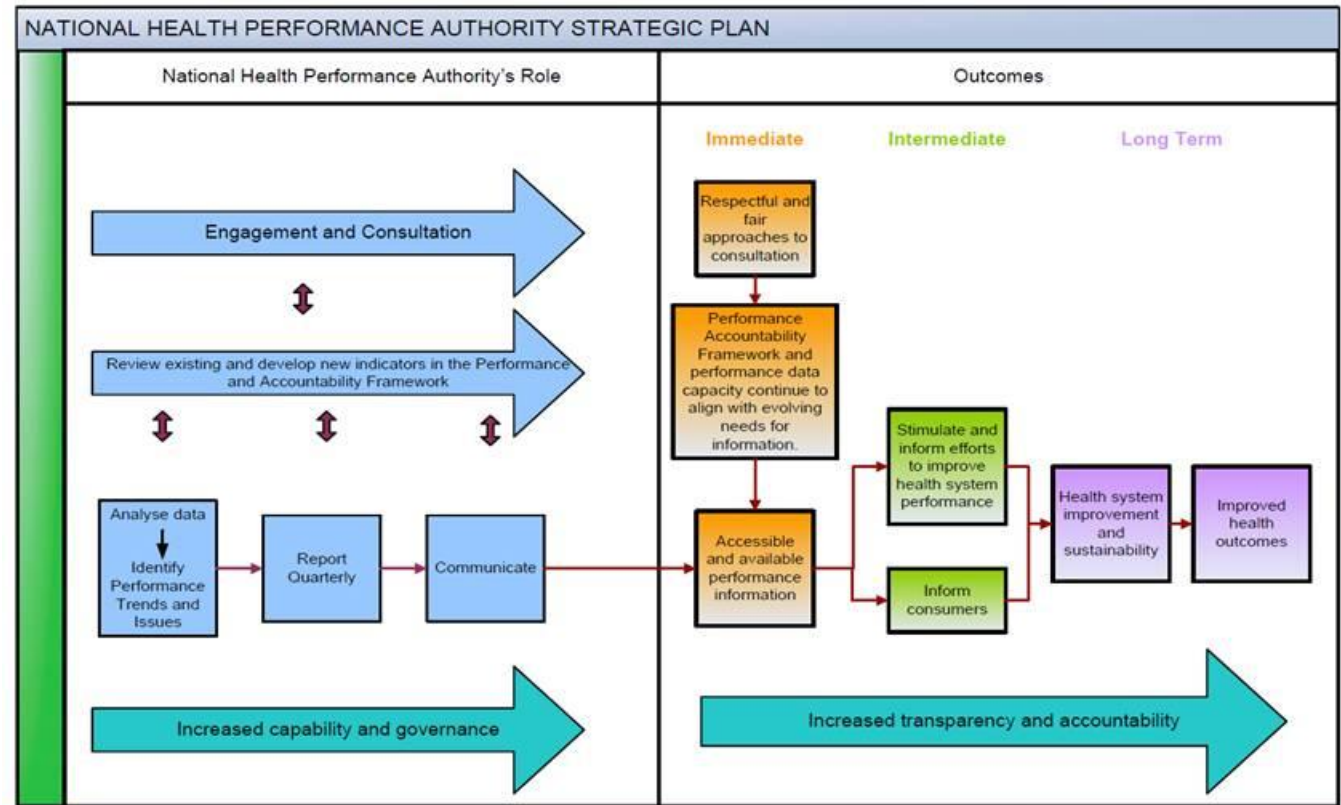
CAHA's members include: health professional groups representing doctors, physicians, nurses, social workers, psychologists, public health and health promotion practitioners, rural and remote medical, nursing and allied health professionals; the national peak body for public hospitals; academics; researchers; primary health and community care providers; community sector organisations; and healthcare consumers.

Further information is provided at **Appendix A**.

CAHA supports the plan's key objectives as follows:

1. Regularly review and continuously develop the Performance and Accountability Framework to ensure that it's still relevant to the needs of the community.
2. Build and maintain respectful relationships with stakeholders to support the Authority's role and enhance its impact.
3. Regularly monitor and report timely, accurate, and locally relevant information that compares and tracks performance of health organisations and health outcomes.
4. Design and disseminate comparable information to stimulate and inform efforts to improve the health system, improve transparency and accountability and inform consumers.
5. Develop effective processes and tools to support data availability, collation, analyses and information management.
6. Pursue excellence in governance, management and operations.

CAHA welcomes the inclusion of sustainability as a key part of the plan (depicted below on page 6):



CAHA agrees that health care providers like hospitals should be accountable in relation to sustainability because:

- the health sector is responsible for a considerable proportion of Australia’s emissions but as yet many health care organisations neither report through other national mechanisms such as the National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting (NGER) legislation nor have yet made much effort to minimise their ecological footprints.
- health care provision has the potential to substantially enhance social and environmental sustainability for improved health and well-being beyond direct impacts on patients – for example by reducing air pollution from emissions associated with fossil-fuels, volatile organic compounds found in materials present in hospitals and so on;
- key organisations like the United Nations and researchers are showing that it is necessary for all organisations to build sustainability into their normal functions, given the increasing resource pressures on our planet which threaten health; and
- the direct and indirect implications of health care provision should do no harm, not just from medical mischief or toxic contaminants but also from issues like the overuse of water, energy and other resources.

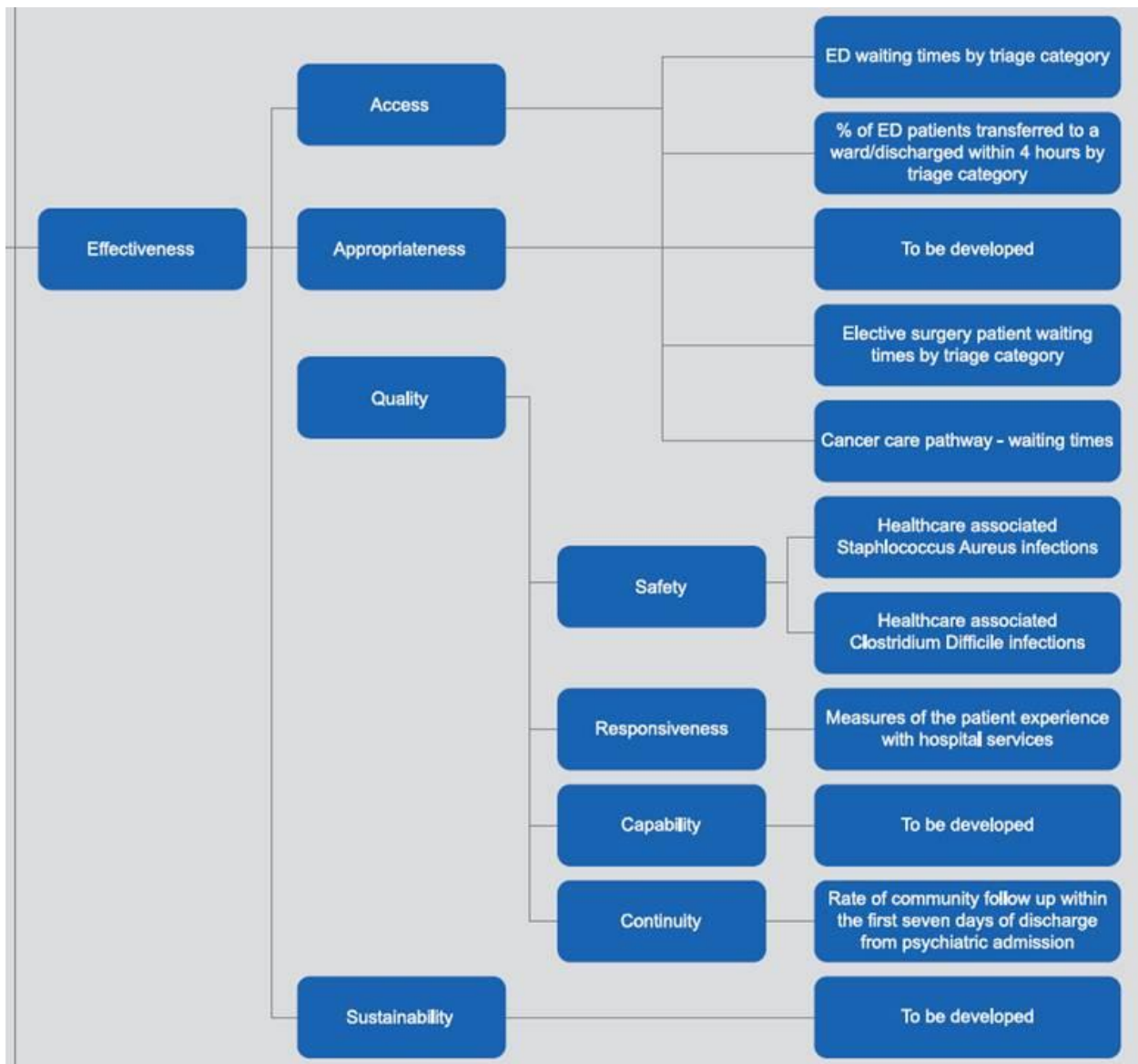
Many hospitals internationally are already taking important steps to address their own sustainability and to reduce carbon emissions. For example, the United Kingdom’s National Health Service has had a range of sustainability initiatives and requirements in place for some years.

However, CAHA requests that NHPA’s Strategic Plan is more explicit in relation to defining sustainability and ensuring NHPA is committed to building capacity within the health care sector in relation to sustainability.

This is warranted given:

- existing work through the Australian Government’s Measuring Sustainability Project (see Appendix B);
- Australia’s chequered history in relation to accountability around sustainability (see Appendix C);
- health practitioners have very diverse perceptions about sustainability; and
- health practitioners are starting to make efforts in relation to sustainability – examples can be found in the Health Practitioner’s Guide to Climate Change (Earthscan 2009).

Another reason to better define sustainability can be found in the NHPA performance and accountability framework (31 pages) released in May 2012, which incorporates the intent to develop sustainability reporting as per page 16 (excerpt below noting indicators are yet to be developed) and later mentioned on page 19.



Above reference:

[http://www.nhpa.gov.au/internet/nhpa/publishing.nsf/Content/0C3097B45A9657E9CA2579C10008DD00/\\$File/0508%20FINAL%20PAF.pdf](http://www.nhpa.gov.au/internet/nhpa/publishing.nsf/Content/0C3097B45A9657E9CA2579C10008DD00/$File/0508%20FINAL%20PAF.pdf)

Sustainability indicators should include financial, social, ethical, and environmental criteria and address upstream procurement pathways as well as broader stewardship principles.

Useful resources exist that can be used to inform the development of sustainability indicators for healthcare, such as those being used in the corporate sector such as the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI). GRI is one of the world's most widely used sustainability reporting frameworks. This framework sets out principles and indicators that organizations can use to measure and report their economic, environmental, and social performance.

Specific tools for the health sector include the [Global Green and Healthy Hospitals Agenda](#), a comprehensive environmental health framework that has been developed by the Climate and Health Alliance's international partner, [Health Care Without Harm](#). This document provides a comprehensive framework for hospitals and health systems everywhere in the world to achieve greater sustainability and to contribute to improved public environmental health. The Agenda consists of [ten interconnected goals](#). Each contains a series of Action Items, as well as Tools and Resources that hospitals and health systems can use to support implementation.

Please do not hesitate to contact me in order to provide more detailed examples as to how the NHPA Strategic Plan might be amended in order to better articulate the organisation's role and expectations around the broad area of sustainability. The Climate and Health Alliance would also be pleased to work with NHPA to assist in developing appropriate sustainability indicators for health system performance.

Kind regards

Fiona Armstrong
CAHA Convenor
convenor@caha.org.au

Date: 6 August 2012

APPENDIX A: CAHA Members

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 Research Alliance of Children and Youth (ARACY)
Australian Women's Health Network (AWHN)
Australian Nursing Federation (ANF)
Australian Psychological Society (APS)
Australian Rural Health Education Network (ARHEN)
CRANApus
Doctors for the Environment Australia (DEA)
Doctors Reform Society (DRS)
Friends of CAHA
Health Consumers' Network (Qld)
Health Issues Centre (HIC)

Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA)
Royal College of Nursing Australia (RCNA)
Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP)
North Yarra Community Health (NYCH)
Services for Australian Rural and Remote Allied Health (SARRAH)
Women's Health East (WHE)
Women's Health in the North (WHIN)
World Vision

APPENDIX B: About Sustainable Australia — Measuring Sustainability

The Measuring Sustainability program provides \$10.1 million over four years to improve the availability of information and data relating to sustainability. The program supports the development of a set of Sustainability Indicators for Australia, covering economic, social and environmental issues that are relevant to communities. It will also oversee the establishment of a Directory of Sustainability Measurement to support access to sustainability information at a national and regional scale. The Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities is delivering this program in collaboration with key data agencies, including the Australian Bureau of Statistics. This program is part of the Government's Sustainable Population Strategy.

Refer also to media at: <http://www.environment.gov.au/minister/burke/2011/mr20110510a.html>

APPENDIX C: 'Are We Progressing?'

For more information on the history of sustainability indicators and governance in Australia refer to 'Are We Progressing?' at:

<http://www.australiancollaboration.com.au/government-business/accountability/are-we-progressing/>

References of interest:

About the Climate and Health Alliance - <http://caha.org.au/about/>

NHS initiatives - <http://www.sdu.nhs.uk/>

Health Practitioner's guide to Climate Change, Earthscan 2009 - <http://www.publish.csiro.au/pid/6247.htm>

The Global Green and Healthy Hospitals Agenda <http://greenhospitals.net/an-environmental-health-agenda-for-hospitals/>

Health Care Without Harm <http://www.noharm.org/>

Health care savings associated with emission reductions (report from Health Care Without Harm - http://www.noharm.org/europe/news_hcwh/2010/sep/hcwh2010-09-14.php

World Health Organisation publication on health care settings -

http://www.who.int/globalchange/publications/healthcare_settings/en/index.html

Practice Greenhealth association - <http://practicegreenhealth.org/>

American Hospital Energy Alliance -

http://www1.eere.energy.gov/buildings/alliances/hospital_energy_alliance.html

The Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL) is a leading European not-for-profit organisation -

<http://www.env-health.org/policies/environment-health/>