

**Fiona Armstrong: On receipt of the 2017 Tony McMichael Award
25 October 2017**

I'm very honoured by the award, really very honoured. Tony McMichael was one of my heroes, he was an inspiration to me, and a welcome and generous guide.

I feel extremely fortunate to know him, and to have received his counsel and support for the work we do at the Climate and Health Alliance.

Tony's work was quite literally the inspiration for the Climate and Health Alliance. When I first became aware of his research through my work as a health journalist in the 2000's, it seemed to me that the very serious and profound risks he described for human health and well-being - and survival – were not being addressed by health sector actors, and that there was very little understanding among health professionals about the consequences of global warming. And given the importance of stakeholder input into policy development, there was very little appreciation of the impacts on health and well-being among those who were developing climate policy – such as it is, in Australia.

So when I left my job in health policy at ANMF in 2009 to do a Masters in Politics and Public Policy, researching climate policy options for Australia was top of mind, to try and figure out how to get Tony's research and that of his colleagues in this field into policy.

And that is what we have been seeking to do, among other things at the Climate and Health Alliance (CAHA), since.

It's been an enormous privilege to have the opportunity to put this kind of idea into action, and to be have the opportunity to dare to dream about how things could be different. It's rare, I think, for people to have this sort of professional freedom, to conceive a direction, a new organisation or vehicle, and to have the opportunity to make it happen.

It's been a privilege to have the support of organisations like PHAA, and leaders like Michael Moore, as we have sought to get this issue on the

agenda, build the case for action, document and promote the issue through research translation and dissemination, engaging with the sector, supporting the sector to lead by example, and using the profile, prestige and moral purpose of the health community to advocate for change.

It's been an incredible privilege to have the support of many extraordinary individuals who have contributed to CAHA – through the expert advisory committee, on the board, as partners, on working groups, as donors, supporters, and members.

In particular I would like to acknowledge the extraordinary commitment of our immediate past President Dr Liz Hanna who has been a tireless champion for this work, both through her own exemplary research, and in her role as President and spokesperson for CAHA, which I suspect involved many early mornings and late nights and long days, trudging in the dark to television studios, conducting phone interviews in all manner of places (quite likely in bed!), making the case for action in pithy, persuasive and pragmatic terms. Not to mention the many hours spent in reviewing, planning, deliberating, and decision-making involved in an active and ambitious advocacy collective.

Also present, and just as hard working, is Peter Sainsbury, now Acting CAHA President, who I would also like to acknowledge. Peter is a wise counsel, mediator, generous and expert reviewer, and seemingly tireless contributor to CAHA's work – and respected representative in local, state, national and international forums.

I am genuinely grateful for what I consider to be the enormous privilege associated with being able to make a contribution and, along with the support of countless others, to be making a difference on an issue I am incredibly interested in and passionate about.

I'm incredibly grateful for the support of my husband Lane Crockett, himself a significant leader in the community on an associated issue – delivering renewable energy solutions to help avert the worst of the coming climate crisis. Lane's willingness to support my efforts, and

accept the sacrifice that comes from working on an issue where funding is scarce, and his unswerving dedication to the issue, to me, and to this work is beyond compare. I also acknowledge the sacrifice made by our daughters, as a mother very often missing – to meetings, writing reports, submissions, or the endless tsunami of correspondence entailed in building a movement for change. But I hope their future may be the better for it.

So my thanks and appreciation to the Ecology and Environment Special Interest Group that conceived this award, to Peter Tait who is also tireless in his efforts, to PHAA to making this award to me, one that I will treasure more than any other. I still feel a sense of shock and loss when I think about Tony, and I hope if he were here, that he would approve of my nomination and acceptance of this award. I do know he approved of and was proud of our work – in fact one of my treasured moments was hearing him describe the release of Our Uncashed Dividend report, in which we described the health gains possible from climate actions, as a ‘seminal moment’ in the climate-health advocacy story.

This is certainly a proud moment for me, but as I hope I have inferred, none of what I have been involved in accomplishing could ever have been achieved by one person alone, so my heartfelt thanks to all those who also dare to dream, who help make it possible.

Thank-you.