

Healthy, Regenerative and Just

Our vision for a better future



November 2020



CLIMATE AND
HEALTH
ALLIANCE

Acknowledgement and Commitment

We recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People as the traditional custodians of the land on which we live and work and acknowledge that sovereignty of the land we call Australia has never been ceded. We commit to listening to and learning from First Nations people about how we can better reflect Indigenous ways of being and knowing in our work.

Rewrite the Future

This report is a collaboration between Climate and Health Alliance (CAHA) and over 100 thought leaders. We are grateful for the input and advice from a range of contributors.

About Climate and Health Alliance

The establishment of the Climate and Health Alliance was a direct response to the call from the international medical journal The Lancet in 2009 calling for a public health movement that ‘framed the threat of climate change for humankind as a health issue’.

CAHA’s members recognise that health care stakeholders have a particular responsibility to the community in advocating for climate action to protect and promote human health.

CAHA works to catalyse action on climate change through building a powerful health sector movement, nationally and internationally.

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Contents

Executive summary	1
Introduction	2
A process for planning a better future	3
Our vision for the future	4
Realising this vision: the policy agenda	7
Key areas of policy action	8
Conclusion	16
Acknowledgments	17

Executive summary

The document was developed following the Rewrite the Future roundtable series in 2020, where over 100 thought leaders from multiple sectors came together during the disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic to engage in a process of futures thinking.

This process led to the creation of a series of narrative scenarios, describing possible alternative futures for Australia in 2030, and this policy agenda, which arose from a process of backcasting, to describe the steps to get to the #futurewechoose – one that is Healthy, Regenerative, and Just.

A healthy, regenerative and just future is available to us. It is scientifically, economically, culturally, socially, and technologically feasible.

This future is one that benefits everyone. Achieving it however means we must acknowledge and face up to uncomfortable truths: that our current economic system, focussed on growth, irrespective of environmental, human or social harm is deeply counterproductive. And that left unchecked, our current trajectory poses existential threats to humanity i.e. it threatens the survival of billions of people around the globe, and the continuation of civilised, and peaceful, human societies.

Achieving this future will require transformation of our energy and transport systems, housing and infrastructure, urban planning, food systems, and governance. All of this will almost certainly require a disruption of current power dynamics.

The good news is, if implemented, these measures will help us tackle both the climate and biodiversity crisis, and deliver significant public health, economic, and environmental benefits.

The document relates to, and builds on, the Framework for a National Strategy on Climate, Health and Wellbeing for Australia. It includes recommendations under eight Areas of Policy Action:

1. Supporting healthy and resilient communities
2. Health-promoting and emission-reducing initiatives
3. Emergency and disaster-preparedness
4. Education and capacity building
5. Leadership and governance
6. Research and knowledge
7. A sustainable and climate-resilient health care sector
8. Thriving ecosystems

Introduction

In early 2020, the declaration of the COVID-19 pandemic shifted the foundations of life for people across the globe.

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused unprecedented social, economic and cultural disruption, caused widespread human suffering and exposed the fragility of billions of lives, societies, and economies in the face of a global public health crisis.

The response to the pandemic has required unprecedented cooperation, information sharing and aligned strategies between and within nations and the support and cooperation of citizens, businesses and the third sector.

It has required investment in supporting vulnerable people, and in shared assets, such as essential services and healthcare, including virtual delivery to ensure safety and improve accessibility. However due to entrenched and long standing gaps, many inequities remain.

While an enduring and committed public health response to COVID-19 may eventually bring the pandemic under control, the world is waiting for the emergence of a safe and effective vaccine to offer widespread protection and enable the lifting of restrictions on human movement within nations and around the globe.

There is however another global health crisis that is far more insidious and poses a much greater threat to public health, human society, and our national and global economy than COVID-19; and that is climate change.

Climate change affects health in many ways: directly by the increased intensity and frequency of extreme weather events, such as prolonged heatwaves, floods and bushfires; and indirectly through worsening air quality, changes in the spread of infectious diseases, risks to food safety and drinking water quality, and effects on mental health. The negative health impacts of climate change range from impacts on every human organ system, to disruption of the healthcare supply chain, damage to health infrastructure and threats to the safety and quality of care.

COVID-19 has also highlighted the links between environmental and human health. Environmental degradation, in particular land-clearing, has been linked to the rise of zoonotic diseases, such as COVID-19. Rising temperatures further accelerate the spread of infectious diseases.

To avoid further health and environmental disasters, all levels of government and sectors of society must integrate public health, climate preparedness and environmental protection measures.

Australia's response to COVID-19 by its government and people has shown the potential for drastic change and swift reactions. Our response has illustrated a willingness across society to change our behaviour and engage in a massive cooperative effort to tackle a public health threat. It is clear that we are willing to make sacrifices if we understand the threat and that our actions now will lead to a better future for everyone.

A process for planning a better future

As we move forward, there are many different pathways we could choose.

In 2020, CAHA led a process of deep thinking and engagement in the Rewrite the Future roundtable series, which brought together over 100 thought leaders from health, social science, environment, human ecology, biodiversity, sustainability, finance, economics, urban design, media, science communication, Indigenous land and fire management, race relations, criminal justice, and futures thinking over a six week period to collectively imagine the future. We sought to use the moment of disruption provided by the COVID-19 pandemic to imagine possible alternative futures for Australia, and to describe a preferred future – and the steps required to achieve it.

Guided by futures experts, we used a process of developing narratives for four possible alternative future scenarios, involving no change, marginal change, maladaptive change and radical transformative change.

What emerged was four possible alternative futures, from which (using a process of backcasting) we surfaced the key elements of a preferred, integrated scenario, and began to describe a pathway to get there.

What this process revealed is that we are confronted with the following choices:

- If we avoid making hard decisions and avoid facing up to the systemic global challenges of the climate and biodiversity crisis, and the social and environmental consequences of the dominant neoliberal policy agenda, and continue with the status quo, we will find ourselves ill-prepared for what lies ahead [No change].

- If we wait and then invest in climate protection measures and the low carbon transition too late, we will find ourselves increasingly vulnerable and may miss out on the economic opportunities associated with the new wave of investment this will bring [Marginal change].
- If we hesitate and then panic, we might find ourselves with limited and increasingly unpalatable options that leave us with undesirable and unintended consequences, and disproportionate impacts across society [Maladaptive change].
- If we proceed with a transformative agenda without giving serious consideration to the shortcomings that currently exist in global society (increasing inequity, unfettered corporate influence on policy, and the short termism characterising current politics) we may appear to make progress on current indicators, but fail to sustain a direction that sees us tackling deep and wicked problems in the longer term [Radical transformative change].

Or:

- If we proceed with our eyes open to the interconnected and complex challenges we face, and do this with courage, humility, and the generosity that has characterised the community response to COVID-19, we can employ solutions that offer wide ranging benefits and set us up well to succeed, and flourish, into the future [the future we choose].

Our vision for the future

A healthy, regenerative and just future can be the future we choose.

Some of the insights from our engagement in futures thinking remind us that:

- the future will likely be different in many respects from the present;
- the future is not fixed, but consists of a variety of alternatives;
- people (ie us) are responsible for choosing between those alternatives; and
- the policies, strategies and actions we choose can help us realise the futures we consider desirable and prevent those we consider undesirable.

The future we describe here is available to us. It is scientifically, economically, culturally, socially, and technologically feasible.

This vision is shared by hundreds of organisations, representing millions of health professionals across the globe. It reflects the [Open Letter in support of a #HealthyRecovery produced by the Global Climate and Health Alliance](#) (of which CAHA is a member) in May 2020. It responds to the joint statement: [Beyond COVID-19: Toward healthy people, a healthy planet, justice, and equity](#), released by our international partner, Health Care Without Harm, and its global network in August 2020. It is inspired by the [World Health Organization Manifesto for a healthy recovery from COVID-19](#) released in May 2020.

Healthy, regenerative and just

A healthy, regenerative and just future is one that benefits everyone. It requires us to acknowledge and face up to uncomfortable truths: that our current economic system, focussed on growth, irrespective of environmental, human or social harm is deeply counterproductive. If our current trajectory continues unchecked, this poses existential threats to humanity i.e. it threatens the survival of billions of people around the globe, and the continuation of civilised, and peaceful, human societies.

Achieving this future involves a clear-eyed look at current structural political, social, economic, environmental and public health challenges, identifying and implementing integrated strategies, and recognising and valuing Indigenous peoples' knowledges generated over thousands of years. We must move beyond silos in terms of public dialogue, policy portfolios, investment strategies, and political and business and third sector priorities and leadership.

This requires transformation of our energy and transport systems, housing and infrastructure, urban planning, food systems, and governance. All of this will almost certainly require a disruption of current power dynamics. The good news is, if these measures to tackle global warming and the biodiversity crisis are developed carefully with human and planetary health as an overarching goal, all of them can deliver substantial benefits.

These benefits apply not just to the health of individuals, but will improve the health and wellbeing of the whole population, and (due to the economic value of avoided ill-health and associated productivity gains), will deliver considerable savings for healthcare and social services budgets (which combined, constitute

between 30-40% of GDP as the largest source of government expenditures for many developed economies).¹

We must align our goals to stabilise – and reduce – our greenhouse gas emissions, with addressing the global burden of disease from preventable causes, and action to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.²

A healthy, regenerative and just future refers to

one in which we prioritise planetary health, based on a culture of cooperation for collective benefit, and the wise stewardship of the natural systems on which human health depends.³

1. <https://ourworldindata.org/government-spending>
2. [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(15\)61044-3/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(15)61044-3/fulltext)
3. [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(15\)61038-8/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(15)61038-8/fulltext)

Our vision for a better future: Australia in 2030

We land in this future following a crisis. It could be COVID-19, it could be a breakdown in foreign relations, it could be a natural disaster.

The crisis becomes a catalyst. We have found ourselves at a collective crossroads.

The scale and nature of challenge forces us to reflect on the negative aspects of our current economic system. We decide to grapple with the negative outcomes of socio-economic and cultural divides. We confront the consequences of failing to protect our fragile ecology.

We prioritise health, and nature.

Drawing on our collective resourcefulness, ingenuity and commitment to equity, we mount a bold response that sees us align health and environmental outcomes with combined goals of economic and social security.

Through open and constructive public dialogue, we build a shared understanding of our responsibility to current and future generations. We commit to drawing on the knowledge of Indigenous people, to be 'good ancestors', and to leave a positive legacy for our children, and their children. In the third decade of the 21st century, amongst the rich diversity of people who call Australia home, we depoliticise the issues by recognising the most powerful of uniting principles: We are all human.

We find common ground.

We tackle the post-COVID economic crisis with a policy agenda that prioritises equitable spending in a health focussed and regenerative economy. This creates over one million

new jobs over the ensuing decade, providing lasting economic value, simultaneously cutting emissions and improving people's lives. Policies with a sustainable 'future focus' gather strong support from communities and businesses.

Strengthened environmental laws see our unique and diverse flora and fauna recover, supported by the creation of Indigenous-led land management and conservation programs.

Progress is neither perfect nor instant, but we commit to staying the course.

A Climate Change Act, introduced by a multi-party federal government, sees a clear roadmap, with specific targets and timelines, to achieving net zero emissions by 2050. The business community responds to this leadership from the government by investing heavily in decarbonisation, driving jobs growth, and we surprise ourselves and others by achieving a 45% reduction of 2005 levels by 2030.

We begin exporting renewable energy to South East Asia, whose markets have recovered from COVID-19, and are hungry for clean energy to drive their own economic and community development . A new sustainable approach to food and agriculture answers how we might improve nutrition, safeguard the environment and hardwire resilience to global shocks like pandemics into our systems.

We champion truth and accountability.

With renewed public and private investment into the media and the arts, our public dialogue is richer, more diverse, and less polarising. Regulations hold large technology companies accountable and we see new frameworks for data management and technology-supported ethics and fact checking.

We respect and draw on Indigenous cultural knowledge and practice.

The now ratified Uluru Statement from the Heart captures what has become a nationally accepted mantra – *let's walk together into a better future for us all.*⁴

4. The Uluru Statement from the Heart was developed at the 2017 National Constitutional Convention <https://ulurustatement.org>

Realising this vision: the policy agenda

How do we get here?

As we discussed earlier, our future depends on the choices we make. To realise this future, we need to make the decisions that take us in the direction we choose.

Building a new social agenda, realising a regenerative net zero emissions future, truly valuing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, the First Peoples of this land, making decisions that benefit all of us, rather than the few – this requires a collective vision and commitment to making decisions in a meaningful timeframe. We can't postpone responsibility. We cannot get to net zero emissions by 2050 by starting in 2040.

We have to start now.

Key areas of policy action

As we look to rebuild our economy from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and achieve our chosen future, we must make use of the opportunity to re-shape our society for a healthy, resilient and sustainable future for all.

This requires a comprehensive nationally coordinated response to the climate crisis, which puts health and well-being at its core.

This must include:

1. Australia acting as a good global citizen, which includes taking the steps required to put Australia on a path to its fair share of the global task to limit global warming to less than 1.5 degrees, and supporting poorer countries to adapt and build resilience to climate change.
2. Public and private investment to dramatically reduce greenhouse gas emissions, support jobs in clean and low carbon industries, and secure clean air, clean water and healthy food as basic human rights.
3. Integrating climate and health disaster and emergency planning in order to effectively manage threats from concurrent climate and health emergencies
4. Building on existing capacity in the community to enhance resilience, including dedicated support for communities faced with immediate and ongoing impacts of climate change and energy transition.
5. Investing in education to train the workforce required for the low carbon transition, and to ensure health professionals and the community better understand links between climate change and health.
6. Investing in climate resilience and low carbon healthcare to ensure the health system and the health and aged care workforce can cope with climate impacts and continue to provide safe, quality care.
7. Prioritising sound and transparent governance, and committing to an integrated approach to policy leadership which includes establishing clear responsibilities across multiple government portfolios to deliver on climate and health strategies.
8. Investing in research and knowledge sharing to guide understanding of climate risks and vulnerabilities and effective solutions, including policy.
9. The recognition that human health and the health of our planet are inextricably linked, and that our civilisation depends on human health, flourishing natural systems, and the wise stewardship of natural resources.
10. Recognising the value of, and benefits from, being guided by the unique insights and wisdom available from First Australians' traditional cultural knowledge and practice.

Building on the widely endorsed policy roadmap released by Climate and Health Alliance in 2017, the Framework for a National Strategy on Climate, Health and Wellbeing for Australia, we outline necessary reforms in seven previously identified key areas to create a healthy, regenerative and just society. Given the interconnectedness of human and environmental health, highlighted by COVID-19, we are adding an additional policy area, relating to thriving ecosystems.



We call on federal and state and territory and local governments to fund measures under the following key areas to contribute to a healthy, regenerative, and just society and economy:

1. Supporting healthy and resilient communities

The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed deep existing inequalities in our society which, if we fail to address them, the climate crisis will only exacerbate. We must prioritise tackling inequality to build resilience to respond to, and recover from, future crises. Investing in measures that support communities to anticipate health, environment, and climate risks will limit entrenching further inequity and help build healthy, climate resilient communities.

We can enhance community health and wellbeing and climate resilience through:

- a. Investing in long term risk management of our energy, water and food systems which are crucial to positive health outcomes as well as economic and national security.
- b. Incorporating the concept of planetary boundaries and planetary health into decision-making – to ensure we recognise we are rapidly approaching fundamental limits to finite resources that underpin our economy and way of life, and that our health depends on the state of natural systems, which are being profoundly undermined by our way of life.
- c. Recognising the impact of social, cultural and environmental determinants of health, which include factors such as gender, identity, housing, employment, disability, rurality, food security, natural and urban environments.
- d. Taking an integrated approach to reduce vulnerability to complex interrelated challenges, such as climate change, inequality, poverty, and homelessness, and working with those most at disadvantage to build their capacity to identify priority strategies to support people most at risk from the health, social, economic and environmental impacts.
- e. Recognising the knowledge, capacity and experience that exists in local communities, and ensuring all policy decisions are made through collaboration with, and where possible led by, local communities.
- f. Resourcing and supporting health and social services to support those most in need, and support their long term sustainability by building their capacity to respond to disasters and withstand climate risks.
- g. Investing in primary healthcare and prevention and a multidisciplinary workforce to ensure access to healthcare where it is needed and reduce demand for expensive, high emissions acute tertiary healthcare.
- h. Investing in high quality aged care for all Australians, with an appropriately trained and skilled workforce, including mandated minimum ratios for nurses, to ensure a safe and healthy environment for all residents.
- i. Investing in capacity building initiatives to expand Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health, culture, and conservation initiatives, including Indigenous-led health and community services, education and language programs, Indigenous Ranger programs, and ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in climate adaptation and resilience initiatives, such as bushfire prevention, water management, and carbon farming, which will benefit all Australians.

2. Health-promoting and emission-reducing initiatives

Policies that achieve better health and well-being outcomes and minimise risks while reducing greenhouse gas emissions, creating jobs and saving money are win-win-win options. Fortunately, many carefully designed climate mitigation policies (particularly in the areas of energy, transport, planning, and food/agriculture) can achieve all these goals. This also requires shifting public and private finance and investment towards green and net zero carbon initiatives to accelerate the transition.

Some examples of how to achieve these win-win-win outcomes are:

- a. Committing to the rapid transition away from fossil fuels by:
 - i. prioritising renewable energy infrastructure projects (especially wind, solar and battery storage) in rural, regional and remote communities (enhancing both energy security, regional employment and lower emissions);
 - ii. accelerating the closure of coal-fired power stations to create incentives for the development of more renewable energy (cleaner air, avoided ill-health, and lower emissions);
 - iii. avoiding any further investment in gas infrastructure as this is emissions intensive and no longer required, given the low cost of renewable energy and capacity of storage technology to meet demand;
 - iv. and not using taxpayers money to fund pollution – about \$12 billion of Australian taxpayer dollars are spent every year directly subsidising the fossil fuels that are driving the climate crisis and causing air pollution.
- b. Working with all workers and communities affected by this transition to identify and develop alternative economic opportunities.
- c. Implementing strong air pollution standards to reduce the health and economic costs of associated morbidity and mortality.
- d. Ensuring health impact assessment and health cost-benefit analysis is integrated into all infrastructure projects and policy decisions.
- e. Expanding public and active transport infrastructure in cities and towns, including pedestrian zones and cycling lanes, and charging stations for electric vehicles.
- f. Ensuring all buildings (including schools, hospitals, social housing infrastructure, and offices) are thermally efficient, renewably powered, and climate resilient to reduce running costs and improve health.
- g. Shifting to healthy, nutritious and sustainable diets, with an emphasis on locally sourced food from plants, recognising that land use change is the single biggest environmental driver of new disease outbreaks.
- h. Developing a strong national framework for a circular economy to guide sustainable consumption and production and encourage sustainable business practices and consumer behaviour.
 - i. Powering manufacturing and industrial processes with renewable energy to:
 - i. produce wind and solar power components and electric transport;
 - ii. process minerals and metals for use in other industries;
 - iii. produce medical and healthcare equipment and supplies;
 - iv. and produce new products from recycled municipal, medical, industrial, commercial and electronic waste.
- i. For all organisations, institutions, and companies to divest from any investments in coal, oil or gas infrastructure and/or operations.

3. Emergency and disaster-preparedness

Protecting the health and well-being of communities from the impacts of extreme events and compounding crises, such as bushfires, storms, flooding, heatwaves and pandemics requires building the capacity of health and emergency services to prepare and respond as well as identifying vulnerable populations and landscapes.

To achieve this, we need to:

- a. Expand investment in early warning systems to identify climate-related threats to health, such as extreme weather events, to enable rapid response to mitigate the impacts on Australian communities;
- b. Increase support for disaster preparedness and emergency services to prepare for and respond to climate related hazards and disasters to avoid catastrophes;
- c. Identify at risk populations and infrastructure to inform climate adaptation strategies and emergency response plans;
- d. Invest in and support locally-led disaster recovery initiatives to build capacity and support the agency of affected people and communities; and
- e. Draw on Indigenous cultural knowledge and practice around ecosystem management, and fire prevention, management and response.

4. Education and capacity building

While most Australians recognise that climate change is occurring, policies that educate and raise awareness of the health impacts of climate change are needed to help to build resilience in the Australian community as well as within the health workforce.

This may require:

- a. Developing a national educational campaign to inform communities about the health risks of climate change, health-protective adaptation strategies, and the health benefits of reducing emissions and transitioning to a low-carbon future.
- b. Investing in education and workforce development to build and upskill the workforce to deliver low and net zero carbon initiatives.
- c. Establishing a national education and training framework to support health professionals in recognising, preparing for and responding to the health impacts of climate change, contribute to and lead sustainable healthcare initiatives, and deliver culturally competent care.
- d. Promoting the health, social, economic and climate benefits of transitioning to low carbon lifestyles, and funding research and education programs to support behaviour change.
- e. Developing a national product labelling scheme to communicate embodied carbon and encourage low carbon purchasing.

5. Leadership and governance

The effective governance of integrated policy to tackle climate change and health initiatives requires national leadership and coordination across all levels of government: federal, state and local. It also requires strengthening our systems of representative democracy and taxation to ensure transparent and accountable government, and the ability to provide the services required for a healthy, equitable society.

We call for:

- a. A national strategy on climate, health and wellbeing, encapsulating all these recommendations, and building on those in the earlier Framework released in 2017.
- b. The implementation of the reforms set out in the Uluru Statement from the Heart.
- c. The treatment of climate action as a human rights issue, recognising tackling the climate crisis, ending poverty and enabling sustainable development must occur hand in hand.
- d. A health-in-all-policies approach. All dimensions of climate change are intrinsically linked, and action to reduce the health risks from climate change requires working across all policy areas and sectors to consider the health impact of their policies and practices. For example, this involves considering health in the context of all climate policy decisions, and climate change in all health policy decisions.
- e. A national Ministerial Forum on Health and Climate Change to facilitate cooperation and leadership across multiple portfolios and all levels of government on climate and health policy and programs.
- f. Reform of Australia's taxation to create a fairer, simpler, progressive system to raise the revenue required to fund the services and support needed by the population.
- g. Enhancing the integrity of our representative democracy through:
 - i. the establishment of a federal Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC)
 - ii. restrictions and real time reporting of political donations
 - iii. restrictions on Ministers, Ministerial staff, and departmental executives being employed as lobbyists
 - iv. promoting greater diversity in media ownership

6. Research and data

We must support Australia's climate and health research capacity to evaluate specific health threats from climate change, as well as better understand the health and economic benefits associated with climate action. We must also ensure equitable access to knowledge through investment in digital infrastructure.

This requires:

- a. Funding Australian specific research on climate change and health to understand the regionally diverse climate vulnerability among high risk sub-populations, the distinct pathways of impact and range of health threats.
- b. Utilising a comprehensive set of climate change and health indicators to measure and monitor the health impacts of climate change, such as those available in Lancet Countdown to guide adaptation and mitigation strategies.
- c. Assessing the economic value of health co-benefits of climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies i.e. initiatives that build community resilience, improve air quality, promote active transport, and plant-based diets.
- d. Multidisciplinary research to: identify relationships between chronic disease and urban design, energy and water security, and transport; identify solutions; and guide policy choices.
- e. Evaluating and monitoring the psychological impacts of the ongoing threat of climate change.
- f. Assessing the carbon and environmental impacts of the healthcare sector, and identifying a pathway to net zero carbon operations.
- g. Investing in the digital economy to ensure all people in Australia have equitable access to information and knowledge, and there is capacity and skills in the workforce to utilise digital services and technologies.

7. A sustainable and climate-resilient health care sector

A low/zero carbon, environmentally sustainable, climate-resilient health and aged care sector would deliver demonstrable economic, social and environmental benefits for Australia. It would ensure we can effectively respond to the health impacts of climate change, and continue to deliver high-quality care while realising savings for health sector budgets.

We can build health system resilience and sustainability through establishing a goal of net zero emissions for healthcare, and implementing strategies to achieve this through:

- a. investing in climate resilience and environmental sustainability initiatives in the public health system, while mandating minimum standards across the whole health system;
- b. investing in renewable energy (such as solar panels with batteries) and energy efficiency measures for all metropolitan as well as rural and regional hospitals and health and aged care services;
- c. prioritising environmentally sustainable, low emissions design, construction and operations for all new hospitals and health facilities;
- d. mandating sustainable procurement in healthcare to guide purchasing and support the transition to a circular economy; and
- e. investing in a sustainable and low carbon medical manufacturing industry with a focus on using / producing materials that can be safely sterilised and re-used where appropriate.

8. Thriving ecosystems

We must restore and safeguard Australia's ecosystems, recognising that intact ecosystems are the fundamental basis of human health and livelihoods. Healthy and resilient communities rely on a healthy natural environment and thriving ecosystems.

To achieve this we must:

- a. Expand conservation programs to preserve natural environments, including wilderness areas and national parks, recognising their role in healthy human development and long-term health and wellbeing, as well as provide profound mental and physical health benefits.
- b. Restore and revegetate forests, rivers and wetlands on private and public lands, prioritising bushfire and drought-affected regions, as well as metropolitan, suburban, peri-urban and rural areas.
- c. Protect agricultural land and food production from mining and urban development.
- d. Increase investment in sustainable water infrastructure and management to support sustainable food production and ensure access to clean water for all communities.
- e. Restore and improve soil quality through carbon farming and regenerative agriculture practices.
- f. Ensure that access to traditional lands and respect for native title underpins decision-making with regard to land use and land use change.
- g. Foster and support nature-based enterprises that deliver health, environmental and economic benefits (such as native food production, and nature- and cultural-based tourism).
- h. Support the promotion of biodiversity and human health in urban environments, through the creation and expansion of green corridors, green roofs, and green spaces, and engaging the community through initiatives such as Healthy Parks, Healthy People.
- i. Expand Indigenous ranger programs to create jobs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and enhance environmental management and biodiversity conservation.
- j. Support coastal habitat restoration and monitoring, in partnership with local communities and the fishing industry.
- k. Expand programs to clean up marine debris, including plastics, and support research to inform policy decisions.

Conclusion

This Healthy, Regenerative and Just policy agenda will be used to support the advocacy work of the Climate and Health Alliance and its members, partners and supporters in the campaign for a comprehensive public policy response to address the health impacts of climate change: a National Strategy on Climate, Health and Well-being for Australia.

Acknowledgments

Thought Leaders

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Continue the conversation
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