



Australia's health leaders tackle climate change at Parliament

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Australia's leading health and medical experts are meeting in Canberra today to call on politicians to take immediate steps to protect the health of Australians from the impacts of climate change.

A [nation-wide consultation](#) has revealed deep concern within the health sector that there is currently no national health plan to deal with the impacts of climate change.

These include:

- injuries and illnesses associated with extreme weather events, such as bushfires, extreme storms, flooding, and heatwaves
- the mental health impacts of disasters and their aftermath
- increased spread of infectious diseases
- worsening air quality

Around 40 of Australia's leading health and medical experts will pass on their concerns to parliamentarians from all political parties in today's meeting.

Public Health Association of Australia CEO Michael Moore says it's an urgent issue.

"Public health professionals are anxious to see action on climate change to limit its negative impacts, and we are keen to work with parliamentarians to develop an effective response."

Australian Healthcare and Hospitals Association CEO Alison Verhoeven said: "The health sector can play a major role in climate action; both in terms of reducing the carbon footprint of the sector and as a leader and influencer of opinion at the community level."

Australian College of Nursing CEO Adjunct Professor Kylie Ward FACN, says nurses are driving the push for change.

"Nurses constitute the largest of all healthcare professions and are well positioned to communicate the risk to people's health associated with climate change. We want to

see more support for health professionals to inform communities about this issue, and for a stronger focus on climate change in the education of health professionals across the board.”

Fiona Armstrong, executive director of the Climate and Health Alliance says national leadership in this critical area is missing.

“We know climate change will produce enormous challenges for the physical and mental health of our community in the immediate future.

“Doctors, GPs, nurses, public health professionals, psychologists and others are coming together to let members of Parliament know the time has come for action.”

The health groups will use today’s historic meeting to develop a policy framework to tackle the issue to give to the federal government and parliamentarians in 2017.

Media inquiries: Zoe Edwards on 0400 144 794 or zoe@climatemediacentre.org.au