**MEDIA RELEASE (embargoed until 6am) 4th August 2010**

Health care leaders will meet in Melbourne today to discuss the establishment of a health sector alliance to advocate for urgent action on climate change.

The meeting is hosted by founding members: the Australian Psychological Society; the Australian Women’s Health Network; Doctors for the Environment Australia; and the Public Health Association of Australia.

Fiona Armstrong, convenor of the meeting, said: “Increasing concern in the sector about the significant and profound human health and ecological consequences associated with unmitigated climate change has prompted today’s meeting of over 40 organisations and individuals to discuss a collective position.”

The alliance will represent stakeholders in the health care sector who wish to see the issue of climate change addressed through urgent policy action.

The membership of the Alliance is expected to cover a broad cross section of the sector and include health care professionals from all disciplines, health care service providers, institutions, academics, researchers, and health care consumers.

The alliance is expected to advocate for strong emissions reductions and drawdown of excess CO2, healthy power generation, healthy transport and urban planning, sustainable healthy agricultural systems, improvements to land use, and protection and conservation of water supply.

Ms Armstrong said it was hoped the alliance could contribute to the development and implementation of evidence based public policy to protect the community from the adverse consequences of climate change.

‘It is simply inexcusable for the major parties to be going to a federal election without policies to significantly reduce emissions. The science suggests we have just one decade to dramatically cut emissions if we are to have any hope of avoiding catastrophic, runaway climate change.[[1]](#footnote-1) As the 15th largest emitter in the world, Australia has a responsibility to act to rapidly reduce our very high per capita emissions. In particular we should be moving away from coal to a clean renewable energy supply system to reduce climate risk, improve population health, and ensure future energy security.”

The alliance is also expected to encourage the health sector to reduce its effect on the environment through reductions in the use of energy and water; production of waste; standards for energy efficiency; and the establishment of environment committees in all health care institutions. Details regarding membership and agreed priorities of the alliance will be announced following the meeting.

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1. Schellnhuber, H. Terra quasi-incognita: beyond the 2°C line, Presentation to Four Degrees and Beyond, International Climate Conference, Oxford University, September 2009. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)