



# CLIMATE AND HEALTH STRATEGY

The Australian Greens will implement a plan to tackle the health effects of climate change based on the National Strategy on Climate, Health and Wellbeing, and commit \$2 million over the forward estimates to this.

We are at a critical juncture both in Australia and around the world to act to tackle global warming and yet our government seems hell bent on taking us in the wrong direction. Instead of taking steps to mitigate catastrophic global warming, under this government, we have been going backwards and in doing so putting the health of the nation in jeopardy.

For decades, both parties have stood by while their big donors have dug up our environment, destroyed our climate and sold off our green spaces, with little accountability. They're polluting the places we live – our farmland, our rivers and our oceans – and destroying the places we love.

Inaction on climate change is having a devastating effect on people's health. Heatwaves in Victoria in 2009 and 2014 contributed to 374 and 167 excess deaths respectively. Air pollution from coal-fired electricity generation is responsible for hundreds of thousands of deaths globally each year, and the health impacts of coal-fired power generation is estimated to cost Australia AUD\$2.6 billion annually<sup>1</sup>.

The Greens have a plan to take care of our planet and the health of all creatures, including humans, who live on it. Our plan for a renewable economy that tackles climate change includes:

- Repowering our economy by transitioning from coal, fracking and drilling for gas to clean and exportable renewable energy;
- Helping ensure that no one who works in fossil fuel industries has their employment jeopardised by providing ongoing access to free training for workers and committing to a just transition for workers who are currently employed by fossil fuel industries; and
- Prioritising and properly funding clean, safe, affordable public and active transport.

Our plan for tackling the climate change impacts on health is a holistic one. It will be based on the Framework for a National Strategy on Climate, Health and Wellbeing, which was developed by medical and climate change experts in the Climate and Health Alliance.

The Climate and Health Alliance brought together a wide range of medical professional bodies and health advocacy organisations to develop an evidence-based, concise and implementable framework. These groups include the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, the Australian College of Midwives, the National Rural Health Alliance and Doctors for the Environment Australia. Our plan, which is backed by \$500,000 of funding per year, will be built

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<sup>1</sup> See Burt et al. 2013, Scientific Evidence for Health Effects from Coal Use in Energy Generation<sup>1</sup> and Biegler 2009, The hidden costs of electricity: externalities of power generation in Australia, A report by the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering (ATSE) 2009

on this work. The funding will allow the plan to be implemented, to ensure that real action is taken on this critical issue.

Aspects of the strategy which we will implement include:

- Establishing a Ministerial Health and Climate Change Forum consisting of Commonwealth and State/Territory Ministers with responsibility for Health, Environment and Energy, reporting to the Council of Australian Governments on the progress of the Strategy's objectives, initiatives and policies.
- Establishing a national education and training framework to ensure health professionals are able to recognise, prepare for and respond to the health impacts of climate change
- Establishing a national environmental health surveillance system which includes climate-related indicators to monitor health impacts.
- Incorporating health impact assessments in the evaluation of project applications from industry and infrastructure projects.
- Providing funding for public education programs to promote healthy, low emissions diets and lifestyles.



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