

CLIMATE AND HEALTH EXPERT ADVISORY GROUP

Communique of outcomes from meeting held on 1 August 2024

Overview

The inaugural meeting of the Australian Government's Climate and Health Expert Advisory Group (CHEAG) was held on 1 August 2024.

CHEAG supports the implementation of the National Health and Climate Strategy by providing expert climate and health advice to the Australian Government. CHEAG is chaired by the Hon Ged Kearney MP, Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care and Indigenous Health. The Deputy Chair is Professor Paul Kelly, the Chief Medical Officer and Head of the interim Australian Centre for Disease Control.

CHEAG is made up of academics, professional representatives, community and industry representatives and experts in climate change and health (refer membership list below).

Key outcomes

Members discussed the Australian Government's approach to implementing the Strategy, and progress to date.

Terms of reference

Members agreed to the Terms of Reference for CHEAG. The role and function of CHEAG will be to:

- Provide confidential, strategic, evidence-based advice and expertise on climate change and health which will support implementation of the Strategy and identify priorities for potential policy and regulation enhancements.
- Review and advise on updates from the Australian Government on implementation of the Strategy, including outlines of progress on delivery, risks and issues, and mitigating action to be taken.
- Identify stakeholders for consultation or involvement in implementation of the Strategy.

CHEAG will meet no less frequently than three times per year.

Implementation Approach

CHEAG reviewed the Australian Government's Implementation Plan for the Strategy and supported the approach to implementation. Strategy actions are prioritised, considering factors such as critical milestone dates, stakeholder needs and resource availability. Project plans and risk management strategies have been developed for each action.

Members noted the governance structure for the Strategy, which comprises a National Climate and Health Program Board, a State and Territory Climate and Health Working Group, and CHEAG. The reporting structure for governance is outlined below.



Strategy action progress update

CHEAG received updates on progress in delivery of the Strategy’s 49 actions. Work has commenced on 31 of the 49 actions. Eleven of the Strategy’s actions are substantively completed. Notable progress has been made in the following areas:

- A national baseline estimate of the total emissions from the Australian health system is nearing completion. This will help illustrate the major sources of emissions in Australia’s health system.
- Australia has joined an international collaboration that includes the UK National Health Service and the US Department of Health and Human Services to decarbonise healthcare supply chains.
- The government will launch a guide on detecting and reducing leaks of nitrous oxide (an anaesthetic agent and powerful greenhouse gas).
- The government will publish new research on opportunities to reduce health system emissions from food and waste.
- An assessment and plan for climate-related threats to Australians’ health and wellbeing is underway, as part of the National Climate Risk Assessment and National Adaptation Plan processes being led by the Department of Climate Change, Energy the Environment and Water.

Members

CHEAG members are listed in the table below:

Name	Title and Organisation
The Hon Ged Kearney MP (Chair)	Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care and Indigenous Health
Professor Paul Kelly (Deputy Chair)	Chief Medical Officer and Head of interim Australian Centre for Disease Control
Professor Lynne Madden	Chair, Multi-College Advisory Committee on Climate Change and Health
Professor Jennifer Martin	President, Royal Australasian College of Physicians
Professor Tarun Weeramanthri	President, Public Health Association Australia
Dr Catherine Pendrey	Chair, Climate and Environmental Medicine Special Interest Group, Royal Australian College of General Practitioners
Adjunct Associate Professor Rebecca Haddock	Executive Director of Knowledge Exchange Australian Healthcare and Hospitals Association
Ms Elizabeth de Somer	CEO, Medicines Australia
Mr Jason Kara	CEO, Catholic Health Australia
Dr Kate Wylie	Executive Director, Doctors for the Environment Australia
Ms Michelle Isles	CEO, Climate and Health Alliance

Professor Eugenie Kayak	Enterprise Professor of Sustainable Healthcare, University of Melbourne
Professor Kathryn Bowen	Deputy Director, Melbourne Climate Futures
Professor Sotiris Vardoulakis	Director, Healthy Environments and Lives Network
Associate Professor Angie Bone	Associate Professor of Practice in Planetary Health, Monash Sustainable Development Institute
Professor Hilary Bambrick	Director, National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health, Australian National University
Professor Alexandra Barratt	Professor of Public Health, University of Sydney
Associate Professor Steve Morris	CEO, Pharmaceutical Society of Australia
Mr Paul Stewart	CEO, The Lowitja Institute
Associate Professor Veronica Matthews	Associate Professor, Centre for Rural Health at the University of Sydney
Mr Tom Symondson	CEO, Aged & Community Care Providers Association
Ms Jade Guitera	Vice-President External, Australian Medical Students' Association
Ms Roslyn Morgan	Environmental Health Officer, Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation
Professor Tracy Levett-Jones	Lead, Planetary Health for Nursing and Midwifery Research and Education Collaborative
Associate Professor Carolyn Hullick	Chief Medical Officer, Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care
Professor Nick Watts	Director, Centre for Sustainable Medicine, National University of Singapore
Ms Doris Whitmore	Interim CEO, Asthma Australia

Background

In December 2023, the Hon Ged Kearney MP, launched Australia's first [National Health and Climate Strategy](#), which sets out a whole-of-government plan to achieve "healthy, climate-resilient communities, and a sustainable, resilient, high-quality, net zero health system."

CHEAG is a crucial element of the governance structures that oversee and support the implementation of the Strategy, and broader national climate and health policy.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is expected to take place in November 2024.

Contact

For further information, please contact the Climate and Health Secretariat at ClimateHealth.Secretariat@health.gov.au