

CLIMATE AND HEALTH EXPERT ADVISORY GROUP

Communique of outcomes from meeting held on 2 December 2024

Overview

The second meeting of the Australian Government's Climate and Health Expert Advisory Group (CHEAG) was held on 2 December 2024.

CHEAG is chaired by the Hon Ged Kearney MP, Assistant Minister for Health, Aged Care and Indigenous Health. It comprises academics, professional representatives, community and industry representatives and experts in climate change and health (see below for membership list). CHEAG supports the implementation of the National Health and Climate Strategy by providing expert climate and health advice to the Australian Government.

Following Professor Paul Kelly's retirement as Chief Medical Officer and head of the interim Australian Centre for Disease Control (CDC) on 21 October 2024, Ms Mary Wood has been appointed as Head of the interim CDC. CHEAG members welcomed Ms Wood as the group's new Deputy Chair. Assistant Minister Kearney acknowledged Professor Kelly's commitment to climate and health policy and thanked him for his significant contribution to developing and implementing the National Health and Climate Strategy.

Members discussed the progress the government has made since the last meeting in August to implement the Strategy, including the significant work to develop the Health National Adaptation Plan. Members also identified priority discussion topics for CHEAG meetings in 2025.

Update on implementation of the National Health and Climate Strategy

CHEAG received updates on progress in delivery of the Strategy's 49 actions. Work has commenced on 31 of the 49 actions. Significant progress has been made on 17 Strategy actions, with 12 either completed or substantially completed. Notable progress has been made in the following areas:

- A Joint Statement titled '[Working together to achieve sustainable high-quality health care in a changing climate](#)' was agreed by all Australian medical colleges, the interim CDC, the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care, and the Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association.
 - The Joint Statement commits signatories to working together to develop a framework for action to embed climate awareness in health professional education and training, and to optimise models of care delivery in line with the three principles of sustainable healthcare (prevention, tackling low value care, and providing high value, low carbon care).
 - To develop this framework, a Working Group has been established including the joint statement signatories and representatives from nursing and allied health profession groups.

- The interim CDC, in partnership with the University of Melbourne, published [‘Detecting and reducing leaks from nitrous oxide in healthcare facilities – A practical guide’](#), a landmark contribution to efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from use of nitrous oxide in healthcare settings, over 70% of which is estimated to consist of leaks from piping.
- The Australian Government published the [Health Technology Assessment Policy and Methods Review](#) with recommendations concerning consideration of environmental impacts in health technology assessment.
- The [Council of Australian Therapeutic Advisory Groups \(CATAG\)](#), in partnership with the interim CDC, established an Expert Advisory Group to review the evidence about the inhalational anaesthetic desflurane in light of its significant contribution to climate change. The interim CDC led the development of an evidence review to inform the group’s recommendations.
- The interim CDC published a [‘Systematic Mapping Review of Australian Research on Climate Change and Health Interventions’](#). This publication identified gaps in the Australian climate and health literature and will inform engagement with research funding bodies to identify future research priorities.
- The Australian Government funded a [‘Pacific Climate and Health Resilience Package’](#) under its Partnerships for a Healthy Region Initiative. The initiative will support Pacific nations to build health system resilience to the impacts of climate change.

Health National Adaptation Plan update

CHEAG received an update on the interim CDC’s progress in developing the Health National Adaptation Plan (HNAP). The HNAP is being developed in alignment with the economy-wide National Adaptation Plan, which is being developed by the Australian Government Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water.

Since the last CHEAG meeting, the interim CDC has conducted a targeted consultation exercise with stakeholders identified through previous public consultations to inform development of the National Health and Climate Strategy and the National Adaptation Plan. Feedback from the consultation process identified priority areas of action to support the community and health system to adapt and become more resilient to increasing climate-related risks.

Discussion topics for 2025 CHEAG meetings

A discussion considered how best to structure future meetings to draw on the expertise assembled in CHEAG. It was agreed to hold deep dive discussions at each meeting soliciting member input into priority areas. The meeting identified two priorities for discussion: (1) development and implementation of the Health National Adaptation Plan and (2) options for reducing emissions by reducing waste and resource use in healthcare (including food production). Additional topics suggested include addressing the impacts of climate change on First Nations health, supply chain decarbonisation, reducing care of low clinical value, and addressing the mental health impacts of climate change.

The next meeting is expected to take place in March 2025.

CHEAG Members

Name	Title and Organisation
The Hon Ged Kearney MP (Chair)	Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care and Indigenous Health
Ms Mary Wood (Deputy Chair)	Head, 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	Immediate Past 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	Chief Executive Officer, Medicines Australia
Mr Jason Kara	Chief Executive Officer, Catholic Health Australia
Dr Kate Wylie	Chief Executive Officer, Doctors for the Environment Australia
Ms Michelle Isles	Chief Executive Officer, 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	Chief Executive Officer, Pharmaceutical Society of Australia
Mr Paul Stewart	Chief Executive Officer, The Lowitja Institute
Associate Professor Veronica Matthew	Associate Professor, Centre for Rural Health at the University of Sydney
Mr Tom Symondson	Chief Executive Officer, 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	Distinguished Professor of Nursing & Midwifery, University of Technology Sydney
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 Kate Miranda	Chief Executive Officer, Asthma Australia
Mr Ian Burgess	Chief Executive Officer, Medical Technology Association of Australia
Ms Donna Burns	Chief Executive Officer, Australian Indigenous Doctors Association
Dr Bronwyn Gresham	Chief Executive Officer, Psychology for a Safe Climate
Dr Danielle McMullen	President, Australian Medical Association
Dr Rik Dawson	President Elect, Australian Physiotherapy Association

Contact

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