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Parliamentary Section

Meeting Brief
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To: Minister Hunt

Subject: MEETING BRIEF - DOCTORS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AUSTRALIA

Minister Hunt
s22

Date: 10 / 2 / 2020

Contact Officer:	Belinda Roberts	Assistant Secretary (Acting), Strategic Policy Branch, Portfolio Strategies Division	s22
Clearance Officer:	Fifine Cahill	Assistant Secretary, Health Infrastructure Branch, Portfolio Strategies Division	s22

Date / Time: Sunday 2 February 6-6.30pm

Location: Phone call – s47F

Purpose: To discuss climate change and health.

Key Attendees/Speakers:	Title:	Organisation:	Mobile No:
Dr Arnagretta Hunter	State Chair	Doctors for the Environment Australia	s47F

Key Matters:

- Doctors for the Environment Australia has indicated they wish to discuss their concerns and solutions for climate change and health, particularly in light of challenges from bushfires, heat and drought.
- Doctors for the Environment Australia (DEA) are one of a number of organisations who have declared climate change a health emergency. The organisation has also been supportive of calls for a national climate change health and wellbeing strategy.

Discussion Guide:

- The Government has worked to develop a sustainable and responsive health system, capable of responding to climate related pressures on the health of the population and the health system.
- Australia's response to the long term and acute health effects of climate change are predominately managed through the existing health system, with a range of programs which can be expanded or operationalised to respond to emerging pressures.
- The Australian Government released its National Climate Resilience and Adaptation Strategy in 2015 (the Strategy).
- The Strategy recognises that in Australia, national and subnational governments, businesses, households and communities all have different but important roles in managing climate risks, including those that impact on health and wellbeing.
- The National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework, released in April 2019, provides the 'big picture' for work that government, industries, business, not-for-profits, communities and individuals in Australia must do together so that we can live successfully with these hazards for decades to come.
- Practically, the Australian government is working with the states and territories to ensure that Australia's capacity to respond to the health impacts of climate change are appropriate and effective, including:
 - The Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) identified climate change as a health protection priority.
 - The AHPPC has asked its National Health Emergency Standing Committee (NHEMS) to develop a National Heat Health Framework.

If asked about the current bushfires and drought

- The Government is also taking action in direct response to the health impacts of the bushfire crisis.
- The Government has provided \$5 million in funding for smoke related research under the Medical Research Future Fund:
 - \$3 million for research into the physiological impacts of prolonged bushfire smoke exposure; and
 - \$2 million for research into the mental health impacts of bushfires and smoke on affected communities.
- In addition, the Government has announced a \$76 million mental health support package for those affected by the current bushfire disaster.

Organisation history

Doctors for the Environment Australia was established in 2002 and is the only voluntary organisation of Australian medical professionals solely focussed on promoting health and the environment. Doctors for the Environment Australia is comprised of medical doctors and students who work across all specialties in community, hospital and private practices.

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Doctors for the Environment Australia have a primary focus on the health harms from air pollution, fossil fuel impacts and deforestation.

Funding provided to the organisation / Ministerial Support:

DEA has not received any grant funding from the Australian Government.

Sensitivities or Contentious Issues:

In a recent article in the Asia and the Pacific Society Policy Forum Dr Hunter raised the absence of any reference to climate change in the Government's Long Term National Health Plan.

- Stakeholders have raised issues around climate as part of consultations undertaken by the Department for the 10 Year National Preventative Health Strategy and a draft framework for the Implementation Plan for the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan 2013-23.

Attachments:

A: Biography of Dr Arnagretta Hunter

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Biographies**Dr Arnagretta Hunter, State Chair, Doctors for the Environment Australia**

Dr Arnagretta Hunter is a cardiologist, physician, and a Senior Clinical Lecturer for The Australian National University Medical School. With broad clinical experience and a commitment to patient-centered medicine, her specialist medical training was at St Vincent's Hospital, Darlinghurst, and St Vincent's Hospital, Fitzroy with fellowship training at the Royal Melbourne Hospital.

Dr Hunter worked at Rivetina Cardiology, a busy clinical practice in Wagga Wagga in regional NSW from 2009 until the end of 2013. In 2014 she relocated to accept a position at Calvary Hospital in the Australian Capital

Territory. In 2018 she moved from Calvary Hospital to work in the General Medicine Unit at The Canberra Hospital. She has been a regional examiner with the Royal Australasian College of Physicians and has had long standing involvement with teaching and training for medical students and junior doctors. She has also spent time as a Specialist Medical Advisor for the Therapeutic Goods Administration.