



**The Hon Greg Hunt MP
Minister for Health**

Ref No: MC18-004368

Mr Andrew Wilkie MP
Member for Denison
GPO Box 32
HOBART TAS 7001

19 MAR 2018

Dear Mr Wilkie

I refer to your letter of 7 February 2018 concerning the launch of the Framework for a National Strategy on Climate, Health and Well-being for Australia. I regret the delay in responding.

This Framework, prepared by the Climate and Health Alliance, provides a roadmap to guide discussions for governments of all levels, as well as health services, on ways to respond to the risks to human health being posed by climate change, at a national, state and local level.

Australia's adaptive responses to the health effects of climate change are made within the overall context of its existing health services. For example, the Australian Government manages a range of programs to address many of the health conditions which also lead to vulnerability to the health effects of climate change, such as airways disease – which is particularly prone to changes in air quality. These programs are managed on a relatively short three-to-four year timeframe, and can be scaled up or down to meet any demonstrated changes in prevalence.

Australia's public health system is ably supported by preventive health mechanisms that help provide a healthy and safe environment, for example by ensuring clean water and air, safe food and housing, and protection from pollutants and the spread of disease. These mechanisms can further support the health system to address the health effects of climate change.

My Department also consults regularly across government agencies, through the Australian Government Disaster and Climate Resilience Reference Group, to ensure that Australia's capacity to respond to the impacts of climate change are appropriate and effective. This incremental approach to adapting to the health effects of climate change will ensure that Australia is able to track any amplification of existing health issues, and direct resources where needed.

Thank you for writing on this matter.

Yours sincerely

Greg Hunt